THE MAṆIPRAVĀḶA LITERATURE OF THE ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVA ĀCĀRYAS

12th to 15th Century A.D.

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Dedicated to my father

SRĪ K. K. APPAN SVĀMĪ

by whose grace I obtained my traditional training.

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PREFACE

I dedicate this work to my late father Sri K. K. Appan Swami, whose knowledge of the traditional literature and whose dedication to teaching it aroused my own love for it from my youth.

It gave me great pleasure when Prof. Gonda expressed the view that the Maṇipravāḷa literature would be an acceptable topic for my dissertation. I can only hope that this effort will result in a greater knowledge of the literature it describes, and that others will be encouraged to carry the work further. Especially it is hoped that other scholars equipped with necessary tools will engage in close linguistic analysis of it.

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Founder Director.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Amṛtāsvādinīrahasyaṅkaḷ.
ADR	Aṣṭādaśa Rahasyaṅkaḷ.
AH	Ācārya Hṛdayam.
AHT	Ācārya Hṛdayam—Tamiḻākkam.
ARR	Amṛtarañjanīrahasyaṅkaḷ.
BV	Bhagavad Viṣayam.
DTR	Dramiḍopaniṣattātparyaratnāvaḷi.
GPP	Guruparamparāprabhāvam 6000.
Itu	36000 or Muppatāṟāyirappaṭi.
MP	Mumukṣuppaṭi.
NTP	Nālāyira tivya pirapantam.
RS	Rahasyatrayasāram.
SM	Stotra mālā.
SVB	Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam.
VMG	Varavaramunīndra Granthamālā.
9000	Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi.
24000	Irupattināḷāyirappaṭi.

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CHAPTER I

THE RELATIONSHIP OF UBHAYAVEDĀNTA TO MAṆIPRAVĀḶA LITERATURE

Outside the Śrīvaiṣṇava community, the tradition of Viśiṣṭādvaita is generally known by its early exponents, Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, who laid the philosophical foundation of the school and established its reputation amidst the contending views (*darśanas*). The following important developments in later Śrīvaiṣṇava literature, especially the literature written in the form of Tamiḻ prose called Maṇipravāḷa, have been virtually ignored:

(1) The acknowledgement of *ubhayavedānta*—the two-fold scripture of Saṃskṛt *śruti* or revealed texts and the Tamiḻ hymns of those who are immersed in God's qualities (*āḻvārs*).

(2) The development of *vyākhyānas* (commentaries).

(3) The introduction of *sampradāyagranthas* (traditional works).

Consequently, this book purposes to make a contribution to the study of Śrīvaiṣṇavism in the post-Rāmānuja period by focussing on these developments in the Maṇipravāḷa literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava preceptors (*ācāryas*) from the 12th to the 15th century A.D.

If we look at the general trend of this literature, we might classify its works into two categories that distinguish the two phases of development—namely the *vyākhyānas* (the commentaries) which represent the earlier phase and the *sampradāyagranthas* (the traditional works) which represent the somewhat later phase. The *sampradāyagranthas* in turn are classified into two sub-types: the *rahasyagranthas* and "other independent works". *Rahasyagranthas* (literally, the secret works) are treatises which contain information necessary for the one who aspires salvation (the *mumukṣu*). Such topics as the three secret mantras (*rahasyatraya*), the three entities of sentient matter or *cit*, insentient matter or

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acit, and the Lord or Īśvara *(tattvatraya)*; Lakṣmī as intercessor between God and man *(puruṣakāra)*; surrender *(prapatti)*; service *(kaiṅkarya)*; preceptor *(ācārya)* and finally, the definition of a Vaiṣṇava are discussed in the *rahasyagranthas*. The category of "other independent works" includes diverse works in Maṇipravāḷa such as *Ācāryahṛdayam*, which describes the greatness of Nammāḷvār, and the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, which narrates the biographies of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas. The study of the *sampradāyagranthas* is especially important for understanding the systematization of Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophy in the post-Rāmānuja period, and so we shall devote special attention to the Ācāryas' reflections on the above themes.

As we survey this period of Maṇipravāḷa literature, we shall focus our attention on Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, who stands midway in this development, because he exemplifies the mature tradition of commentaries—he was given the title of "Emperor of the commentators" *(vyākhyānacakravartin)*—and because he initiated the *sampradāyagranthas*. Whereas previous commentators approach their task less systematically, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai is systematic in his method and style of presentation, his careful philosophical reflections, his diligent use of proof texts from Tamiḻ and Saṃskṛt sources, and his careful record of divergent views of the previous commentators. Because of both his scope and his systematic commentatorial treatment, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's commentaries must be studied as the full elaboration of the *Āṟāyirappaṭi* (the 6,000) and the *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* (the 9,000) and also as an important comparison to the more popular contemporary work, the *Īṭu* (the 36,000). In his commentatorial method, he sets a standard for later commentaries in Maṇipravāḷa, and so a study of his *vyākhyānas* is mandatory for a knowledge of their development.

The nature of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's contribution must also be seen in the traditions that he initiated ; for instance, he is the first Ācārya to write commentaries in Maṇipravāḷa on the Saṃskṛt works of the earlier Śrīvaiṣṇava thinkers, Yāmuna and Rāmānuja, a tradition that is later followed by Ācāryas such as Nāyaṉārāccāṉpiḷḷai, who writes a commentary on the *Catuśśloki* of Yāmuna. In a more limited fashion traits of his style of commentary on Saṃskṛt works are followed by thinkers such as Vedāntadeśika,

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who, for example, borrows Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's Maṇipravāḷa classification of the qualities of the Lord and simply translates this definition into Saṃskṛt for his own commentary.[1]

Besides initiating Maṇipravāḷa commentaries on Saṃskṛt works, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai is the first preceptor in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community to write *sampradāyagranthas* in Maṇipravāḷa. His *rahasyagranthas* are an inspiration for such later thinkers as Piḷḷai-lokācārya and Vedāntadeśika, who present major philosophical contributions in the form of *rahasyagranthas* in Maṇipravāḷa. Also his independent works, such as the uniquely conceived *Pācurappaṭi Rāmāyaṇa* (which is completely composed with phrases borrowed from the hymns of the Āḻvārs)[2], inspired a similar style in later works, such as the *Ācāryahṛdayam* by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷap-perumāḷnāyaṉār. Consequently, on the diachronic level of the development of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Maṇipravāḷa literature, we might argue that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's contribution is a turning point between the two phases of the literature—the *vyākhyānas* and the *sampradāyagranthas*—not just in the relationship of the earlier to the later, but as a vortex in the development that qualitatively changes the trend of the literature, and hence deserves special attention.

As background to the study of *vyākhyānas* and *sampradāya-granthas*, it is necessary in this first chapter to present some introductory comments on the nature of Maṇipravāḷa and to explain why the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas adopt this style of Tamiḻ in many of their works. Such a discussion must explore a very important issue, crucial, in fact, for understanding this whole period of literature, namely the concept of *ubhayavedānta* as the scriptural basis for the school and the rationale for the use of Tamiḻ as a legitimate vehicle for revelation.

[1] Gadyatrayam with his commentary, pp. 7, 23, 48.

[2] This is not only the best work by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai but also represents the best piece of Tamiḻ prose of that period. The whole work covers only two pages but within that space the entire Rāmāyaṇa story is covered. The special feature of this work is that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, without using any of his own words, has selected words and sentences from the Āḻvārs' works and has arranged them in such a manner that they form a continuous story without losing any important incident of the Rāmāyaṇa and holding the readers' interest from beginning to end.

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The Tamiḻ hymns of the Āḻvārs, the *Nālāyiram* (the 4,000) or the *Divyaprabandham* as they are also known in the tradition, came to be acknowledged as scripture on a par with the Saṃskṛt *śruti* (revealed texts of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads). In the general history of Indian religious thought such a belief appears as a radical innovation, for it marks the first (and perhaps only) time a language other than Saṃskṛt claimed to express "revealed truth" as well as to possess the sanctity and authority of the Vedas. That there could be a Tamiḻ Veda (*drāviḍaveda*) is a most important antecedent to the use of Tamiḻ prose or Maṇipravāḷa in the commentaries and later *sampradāyagranthas;* the discussions concerning the Tamiḻ Veda must be carefully traced. Only then shall we be able to understand how the Vaiṣṇava bhakti tradition in Tamiḻnāṭu found its religious inspiration in its mother tongue (as well as Saṃskṛt), allowed all its religious community to have knowledge of the scriptures—even the "secrets" (*rahasyas*)—and through the Ācāryas provided a religious literature in a common language to expound the *ubhayavedānta*, the philosophical teachings, and the religious discipline (*sādhanā*).

Maṇipravāḷa style as generally understood consists of Tamiḻ words interspersed with Saṃskṛt words even as ruby and coral (*maṇi*-ruby-pearl, pravāḷa-coral) are strung together alternately in a necklace. The earliest definition of Maṇipravāḷa in Tamiḻ (following the definitions of Maṇipravāḷa found in Malayāḷam, Telugu, and Kannaḍa)[3] refers specifically to poetry: the *Vīracōḻiyam*, a grammatical treatise written at the time of Vīrarājēndra cōḷaṉ (11th century A.D.), states that if there is an intermixture of Saṃskṛt *syllables* in Tamiḻ writing, it is called *viraviyal*, and that if there happens to be an intermixture of Saṃskṛt *words*, it is called Maṇipravāḷa.[4] However, in later times the term "Maṇipravāḷa" is applied to the Tamiḻ prose literature of the Vaiṣṇavas and Jains

[3] See appendix A.

[4] iṭayē vaṭaveḻutteytil viraviyal, iṇṭetukai naṭaiyētumillā maṇipravāḷa naṟ-revaccollilitayē muṭiyum...

Puttamittiraṉār, Vīracōḻiyam, p. 283. This work was most probably written between 1063-70 A.D.

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which came into existence between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. "Maṇipravāḷa" as applied to this literature differs from previous definitions of this language form in that it does not generally contain Saṃskṛt noun endings and verb endings, and in that it is prose and not poetry. The term "Maṇipravāḷa" as a name for this type of Tamiḷ prose appears quite late; the Vaiṣṇava commentators themselves, for instance, never call their own writings by this term although they are aware that they are using a language that is intelligible to all the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, even to women and members of the lowest social order (*varṇa*)[5]. We shall return to a more detailed examination of Maṇipravāḷa in our analysis of this style used in the commentaries by Tirukkurukaippirāṉpiḷḷāṉ, Nañjīyar, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, and others.

One might ask the question: "Why is this particular style used by the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas?" To answer this question we must explore the intricacies of the development of *ubhayavedānta* and its relation to Maṇipravāḷa. *Ubhayavedānta* as the acknowledgement of a two-fold scriptural tradition also implies the acknowledgement of two religious languages—Tamil and Saṃskṛt. We find the first consciousness of Tamiḷ and Saṃskṛt as parallel religious languages in the writings of the Āḻvārs. Although the Āḻvārs sing their praises of the Lord in Tamiḷ, their mother tongue, they consider themselves part of the Vedic tradition. Consider the following:

> O Kaṇṇaṉ (Skt. Kṛṣṇa), O Creator of the four-faced one (Ta. *nāṉmukaṉ*; Skt. *caturmukhabrahmā*), O Cause (of the universe), O Witness, I, who am Your slave, do not consider that day as the starving (*i.e.*, fasting) day when I have not taken my food. But the day which is the starving day for me (is the day) in which I am not continuously thinking (the Tamiḷ of the mantra) *namō nārāyaṇa*,

[5] Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ, Com. on Tattvatrayam, p. 227. See also Com. on Mumukṣuppaṭi, p. 335. Ladies and Śūdras could not study *śruti*, but this Maṇipravāḷa literature was for all Śrīvaiṣṇavas, including them.

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worshipping You with the flowers of *Iruk* (Skt. *Ṛk*), *Ecur* (Skt. *yajus*) and *Sāma* (Skt. *Sāma*) *Vēta* (Skt. *Veda*).[6]

(Periyāḻvār, *Tirumoḻi*, 5 : 1 : 6)

He Who is in the four *Vētas* (Skt. *Vedas*), which are studied well, Whose colour is just like the water of the stream, which has full fragrance and which is making noise like the sound of the conch (He is the One) Who is in the Milk Ocean (Ta. *Pāṟkaṭal*, Skt. *Kṣīrābdhi*), Who is over the snake couch and Who is also in the ocean of the scriptures (Ta. *nūl*; Skt. *śāstras*) and in the acute intellect.[7]

(Pēyāḻvār, *Mūṉṟām Tiruvantāti*, 11)

In the first stanza there is specific reference to the Āḻvār's worship of the Lord with the *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, and *Sāma Vedas*, which with true bhakti flavour, he describes as "the flowers" of his worship. The second stanza describes the Lord as the One Who is in the four Vedas and in the scriptures. In fact, the Vedic references that appear in the hymns of the Āḻvārs are quite common, and it is not unusual to find the Lord called Cantōkā (Skt. Chandoga from which Chāndogya), Pauḻiyā (Skt. Kauṣītakī) and Cāma (Skt.Sāma)[8] or to find, for example, repeated description of the Lord's dwelling at a certain place where there are Brahmins who chant the Vedas. This shows that the Vedic traditions are part of the temple life,

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[6] kaṇṇā nāṉmukaṉaippaṭaittāṉē kāraṇā kaṟiyāy aṭiyēṉāṉ uṇṇāṉāḷ paciyāvatoṉṟillai ōvātē 'namō nāraṇā' eṉṟu eṇṇāṉāḷum irukkecuccāmavētanāṇmalarkoṇṭu uṇapātam naṇṇāṉāḷ, avaitattuṟumākil aṉṟeṉakkavai paṭṭiṉāḷē

NTP, p. 96

[7] naṅkōtu nālvēttatuḷḷāṉ naṟaviriyum poṅkōtaruvippuṉalvaṇṇaṉ caṅkotap pāṟkaṭalāṉ pāmpaṇaiyiṉ mēlāṉ payiṉṟuraippār nūṟkaṭalāṉ nuṇṇaṟiviṉāṉ.

NTP, p. 661.

[8] pantār melviral nalvaḷai tōḷi pāvai pūṃakaḷ taṇṇoṭumuṭaṉē
vantāy, enmaṉattē maṇṇi niṉṟāy, mālvaṇṇā, maḷaipōloḷivaṇṇā,
cantōkā pauḻiyā taittiriyā, cāmavētiyaṉē neṭumālē,
anto niṇṇaṭiyaṇṟi maṟṟaṟiyēṉ, aḻuntūr mēlticai niṉṟa ammāṉē.

Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, Periyatirumoḻi, 7:7:2. (*NTP*, p. 348).

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and that they are referred to affirmatively by the Āḻvārs as part of their religious heritage.[9] We might even go so far as to say that the Āḻvārs are not in revolt against the Saṃskṛtic traditions associated with Lord Viṣṇu but rather are simply singing His praise and joyously expressing their sentiments in the language most intimate and immediate to them—Tamiḻ. They often make references to both Tamiḻ and Saṃskṛt in the same verse; for instance, in his *Perumāḷtirumoḻi* Kulacēkarāḻvār says:

> When shall I, praising His glory to the supreme satisfaction of my tongue, with folded hands offer flowers to Him, to that Lord Who is lying over the snake couch, at Araṅkam, where the people (live) who have severed their bondage, (to the Lord) Who is the northern language (Ta. *vaṭamoḻi, i.e.*, Saṃskṛt), Who is the poem of sweet joy in Tamiḻ, Who is the leader of the gods (Ta. Skt. *amaras*), Who is the lion among the cowherds, Who protected the cows by lifting the strong mountain, O my Kaṇṇaṉ (Skt. Kṛṣṇa) Whose colour is like the ocean, Who enjoyed tearing asunder the mouth of the horse.[10]
>
> (stanza 1 : 4)

In the process of describing the Lord Who is in His image form at Araṅkam (Skt. Śrīraṅgam), and who takes the form of the various incarnations (Skt. *avatāras*), Kulacēkarāḻvār says pointedly that this Lord is the northern (*i.e.*, Saṃskṛt) language and the poem of sweet joy in Tamiḻ. Similarly, Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār says:

> O heart, you can live if you learn that *mantira* (Skt. *mantra*) not forgetting that *mantira* by the very effect of the *mantira*

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[9] vāyōtuvētam malikiṉṟa tolcīr maṟai yāḷar nāḷum muṟaiyāl vaḷartta tīyōṅka vōṅka ppukaḻōṅku tillait tiruccittarakūṭam ceṉṟucērmiṉkaḷē.

Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, Periyatirumoḻi, 3:2:2. (*NTP*, p. 257).

[10] māviṉaivāy piḷantukantamālai vēlaivaṇṇaṉai eṉkaṇṇaṉai vaṉkuṉṟamēnti āviṉai aṉṟuyuyyakkoṇṭaāyarērṟai amararkaḷtantalaivaṉai antamiḻiṉṟap pāviṉai avvatamoḻiyai paṟṟaṟārkaḷpayilaraṅkattaravaṇaiyiṟṟpaḷḷikoḷḷum kōviṉai nāvuṟavaḻutti eṉṟaṉkaikaḷ koymalar tūy eṉṟukolōkūppumnāḷē;

NTP, p. 148.

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> (*i.e.*, its power), that *mantira* that is in the Upaniṣads (Ta: *antaṇarmāṭṭu anti*; Skt. *vedānta*) and that is the One Who is the primordial One for Intira (Skt. Indra) and Piraman (Skt. Brahmā), Who is in the form of the five elements such as earth, wind, fire, water, and space, Who is in the form of the sound of Tamiḻ, which has the power of expression, Who is in the form of *vaṭacol* (*i.e.*, Saṃskṛt), Who is in the form of the four directions, Who becomes the sun and the moon, Who is the *Antaṇar* (Brahmins), Who is not understood even by the gods in the middle region.[11]
>
> (*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*, 4)

The Mantra which is in the Vedānta is the Primordial One Who is in the form of the five elements, the form of Tamiḻ, the form of Saṃskṛt, and so forth. Later Maturakaviyāḻvār, who is a direct disciple of Nammāḻvār, says the following about his Ācārya:

> He who composed the stanzas through which the inner meaning of the Vēta (Skt. Veda) of the great Vētiyar (Brahmins) is established in my heart.[12]
>
> (*Kaṇṇinuṇciṛuttāmpu*, 9)

The Upaniṣads are said to contain the essence of the Veda, similarly Maturakaviyāḻvār points out that the stanzas of Nammāḻvār contain the inner meaning of the Vēta (Skt. Veda).

Examining the evidence for the acceptance of *ubhayavedānta* in the works of the Ācāryas, we find numerous references in the *taṉiyaṉs* (single stanzas pertaining to a preceptor), as well as in

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[11] intiraṟkum piramaṟkum mutalvaṉtaṉṉai irunilam kāl tī nīr viṇ pūtam aintāy
centiṛattatamiḻōcai vaṭacollāki ticainālkumāy tiṅkaḷ nāyiṛāki
antarattil tēvarkkum aṛiyalākā antaṇaṉai antaṇarmāṭṭu antivaitta
mantirattai mantirattāl maṛavātu eṉṛum vāḻutiyēl vāḻalām maṭaneñcamē.

NTP, p. 435-6.

[12] mikkavētiyar vētattiṉuṭpcruḷ niṛkappāṭi yeṉneñcuḷ niṛuttiṉāṉ
takkacīr caṭakopaṉeṉ nampikku āḷ pukkakātal aṭimaip payaṉaṉṛē.

NTP, p. 207.

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works such as the *Irāmānucanūṟṟantāti*[13] and the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* that purport to recount the biographical data of the Āḻvārs and the Ācāryas. These sources have often been dismissed too glibly on the charge of lacking historically relevant data. We feel, however, that if used with caution, according to the criteria discussed below, they supply genuine and important information not otherwise available. Let us digress for a moment to establish in detail our argument for this position before presenting particular references to *ubhayavedānta* found in this literature. In reference to the authenticity of the *taṉiyaṉs* we wish to note the following:

(*a*) Closely related to the tradition of the *taṉiyaṉs* is a tradition in Tamil literature called *pāyiram* found in Caṅkam and post-Caṅkam texts, for instance the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Cilappatikāram*. The *pāyiram* is an introductory stanza in verse form which narrates the gist of a work and is thought to be written by the foremost disciple of the author, his colleague (in his studies) (*orucāladimāṇākkar*), or his teacher (*āciriyaṉ*). So central to a work of Tamiḻ literature is the *pāyiram* that by the time of the 12th century Tamiḻ grammar called the *Naṉṉūl*, a work is not considered legitimate unless it is prefaced by a *pāyiram*, even though the author may be called "the thousand-headed one", *i.e.*, a great man.[14]

(*b*) Consequently, we may argue that the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition of the *taṉiyaṉ* (which is generally written in Saṃskṛt, is in direct continuity with the Tamiḻ tradition of the *pāyiram*, for every work in Tamiḻ (or Saṃskṛt) has an introductory stanza, and the Tamiḻ term *taṉiyaṉ* itself means "only one stanza (pertaining to a preceptor or a work)".

[13] Tiruvaraṅkattamutaṉār, Irāmānucanūṟṟantāti, Sta. 8, 11, 13, 18, 19.

[14] āyiramukattāṉ akaṉṟatāyiṉum pāyiramillātu paṉuvalaṉṟē.

Pavaṇanti, Naṉṉūl, sū. 14

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(*c*) The first explicit and documented use of the *taṉiyaṉ* is found in Yāmuna's *Stotraratna* where he dedicates three stanzas to Nāthamuni,[15] one of which is remembered as a *taṉiyaṉ* by the succeeding tradition.

(*d*) The remembrance of *taṉiyaṉs* becomes inseparable from the remembrance of the genealogy of preceptors (*guruparamparā*). The *taṉiyaṉ*, besides giving the gist of the work, generally contains the names of the author's father, his Ācārya and his Ācārya's preceptor. The *taṉiyaṉs* are not only chanted prior to the work itself, but the *taṉiyaṉs* of the Ācāryas are strung together like the beads of a necklace and recited. After Rāmānuja appointed the seventy-four families for the propagation of Viśiṣṭādvaita, these individual lineages maintained the history of their genealogy through the recitation of the *taṉiyaṉs* for each preceptor. There are seventeenth century mansuscripts which document such *guruparamparās* via the collection of successive *taṉiyaṉs* tracing the lineage back to the time of Rāmānuja.[16] This tradition is continued even today. At the time of initiation (Skt. *pañcasaṃskāra*), the preceptor, while giving the *upadeśa*, which involves handing over the secrets (*rahasyas*) and mantras, makes the disciple repeat the *taṉiyaṉs* of the genealogy of Ācaryās down to his own preceptor. The preceptor's *taṉiyaṉ* is recited by one of his disciples and then is repeated by the new disciple.

(*e*) Because of these traditions associated with the *taṉiyaṉs* of the Ācāryas, we shall accept generally the authenticity of their authorship unless there is concrete evidence to the contrary.

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[15] namo' cintyādbhutākliṣṭajñānavairāgyarāśaye,
nāthāya munaye agādhabhagavadbhaktisindhave.

Yāmuna, Stotraratna, śl. 1. (*SM*, p. 4.)

[16] For example, such a manuscript is available with Koyil Kantāṭai Aṇṇaṉ Svāmi, Śrīraṅgam.

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(*f*) However, we remain more sceptical about the *taṇiyaṇs* of the works of the Āḻvārs. No doubt they are written at some later time, probably in the period between Nāthamuni and Bhaṭṭar, who is the younger contemporary of Rāmānuja. As consciousness of the hymns of the Āḻvārs as the Tamiḻ Veda increases, it is likely that the Ācāryas wish to pay respect to these earliest spiritual preceptors of the tradition and so compose *taṇiyaṇs* to honour them. Such a view gains corroboration from Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, two generations after Bhaṭṭar, who writes commentaries on all the 4,000 hymns of the Āḻvārs, but never refers to a *taṇiyaṉ*. He might have been unable to fix the text of the *taṇiyaṉ* as complete, realizing that the authors of those *taṇiyaṇs* belonged to the post-Nāthamuni period. Moreover, he must have realized that *taṇiyaṇs* were still being composed.

A similar generalization can be made about the authenticity of information contained in traditional works on the lives of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas—namely, that the information relating to the lives, of the Ācāryas is generally more reliable, because of the *guruparamparā* tradition, than the accounts about the lives of the Āḻvārs. Because of the long lapse of time and the absence of a continuous chain of preceptors, much of the material on the lives of the Āḻvārs is suspect. For instance, we find that the Ācāryas may greatly elaborate a moot reference made by an Āḻvār. The biography of Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār is a case in point. Although this Āḻvār himself occasionally mentions how sinful he once had been, for he had " killed a number of souls ", in the biographical accounts he is portrayed as an evil man throughout his life. Authors like Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar present a rather fanciful character who continues being a robber even as a Śrīvaiṣṇava, stealing to feed the Śrīvaiṣṇava devotees, robbing a golden Buddha from a stūpa at Nāgapaṭṭaṇam for gold to be used at the Śrīraṅgam temple, and even overturning a boat filled with workers who were helping to renovate the Śrīraṅgam temple rather than accede to their demand for wages.[17] While there may have been

[17] *GPP*, pp. 81-86.

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oral traditions about the questionable character of Tirumaṅkai to form the basis of such legends, the accounts furnish little documented information about the historical personage Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār.

Occasionally an account in the traditional biographies appears to be pure myth, for instance, the references to the divine births of the Āḻvārs as incarnations from the different weapons of Viṣṇu. While such myths have importance as religious statements which express the nature of an *āḻvār* as a divine descent into the realm of saṃsāra, they do not, of course, give us biographical data. Unlike the accounts of the lives of the Āḻvārs, accounts of the sayings and actions of the Ācāryas are probably true unless obviously mythical. The date of the written account is not so distant from the time of the lives of the early Ācāryas (there is a span of about 150 years from the time of Rāmānuja to Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar) and, as we have already stated, there is a direct succession of teachers during this period, so that the oral traditions about the lives and teachings of the Ācāryas could be preserved, handed down, and eventually recorded. This emphasis on the remembrance of one's preceptors is one of the peculiar features of the Vaiṣṇava tradition. Even during the time of the Āḻvārs we find statements such as Periyāḻvār's repeated assertions that he belongs to a family that for many generations have been staunch worshippers of Viṣṇu.[18] Yāmuna, when he begins his *Stotraratna*, pays homage to Nāthamuni, Parāśara (author of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*), and Śaṭhakopa (Nammāḻvār).[19] Even though he received the instruction from Nāthamuni's disciples and not from Nāthamuni himself, he takes Nāthamuni as his preceptor. Similarly, Rāmānuja in his *Vaikuṇṭhagadya* pays his respects to Yāmuna.[20] While commenting on the first *sūtra* of the *Brahmasūtras*, Rāmānuja says that in writing this commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* he is

[18] entai tantai tantaitammūttappaṉ ēḻpaṭikāṟṟoṭaṅki vantu vaḻivaḻi āṭceykiṉṟōm.

Periyāḻvār, Tiruppallāṇṭu, sta. 6. (*NTP*, p. 4).

[19] Yāmuna, Stotraratna, ślokas 1-6.

[20] yāmunāryasudhāmbhodhim avagāhya yathā mati,
ādāya bhaktiyogākhyam ratnam sandarśayāmyaham.

Rāmānuja, Vaikuṇṭhagadya, (*SM*, p. 12.)

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following the views of previous preceptors closely: " the earliest Ācāryas who condensed the meaning; following their views (*mata*) I am writing the commentary on the syllables of the *sūtras* ".[21] This is in striking contrast to Śaṃkara, who does not claim to follow the views of all the earlier teachers. The self-conscious claim of a flawless and staunch genealogy and the prior authority of the teachings become givens of the *guruparampara* tradition. Hence the repeated remembrance of the succession.

The Ācāryas not only remember the previous lineage of Vaiṣṇava preceptors and pay homage to them, but also offer their reflections on what it means to be an Ācārya. Vedāntadeśika in his *Guruparamparāsāram* sings the praises of the Āḻvārs and the Ācāryas. He says: God created all the Śāstras and also devised a number of ways to explain them to the people of the world: He created Brahmā, who gave the Upaniṣads, for instance, to explain the Vedas and the Śāstras to the people. When he found that people still could not understand the various features and the purport of the Vedas and the Śāstras, He created the ten Āḻvārs as the ten new incarnations [of God] (*navīnadaśāvatāram*).[22] Just as the clouds take the water from the sea and supply this water to all for their enjoyment, the Āḻvārs also took the essence of the Vedas and the Śāstras and gave this to the people in their hymns. When God found that there were still some people who could not understand the tenets of the Vedas, He created the Ācāryas to explain the works of the Āḻvārs.[23] From this passage we understand Vedāntadeśika's view of how truth is communicated first by the Ṛṣis, then by the Āḻvārs, and finally by the Ācāryas who interpret the truths for all to understand. Besides acknowledging these three successive sources of revelation, he also in his passage implies that the Vedas and the Śāstras, because they are written in Saṃskṛt, are not available to everyone,

[21] bhagavadbodhāyanakṛtām vistīrṇām brahmasūtravṛttim pūrvācāryāḥ samcikṣipuḥ; tanmatānusāreṇa sūtrākṣarāṇi vyākhyāsyante.

Rāmānuja, Śrībhāṣya, line I (Śrībhagavadrāmānujagranthamālā, p. 49)

[22] parāṅkuśa parakālādirūpattālē abhinavamāka oru daśāvatāram paṇṇi.

Vedāntadeśika, Guruparamparāsāram, p. 7.

[23] Vedāntadeśika, Guruparamparāsāram, p. 7.

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and so the Āḻvārs use Tamil as the medium of revelation. But even then, Ācāryas are sometimes needed to interpret the meaning.

Because the position of the Ācāryas assumes such proportions that at times they are considered the embodiment of God Himself, the details of the Ācāryas' lives are remembered as the model of religious life, and serve as examples for others in the community to emulate. It is not surprising then to find incidents in their lives recorded in works such as the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* or the *Vārtāmālai*, an anthology of the sayings of the Ācāryas. Thus we argue that references to *ubhayavedānta* (as well as many other subjects we shall have occasion to examine) found in the literature of the *taṇiyaṇs* and traditional accounts about the Ācāryas often provide historical data.

Information contained in the traditional biographies of the Āḻvārs, however, should be subject to greater scrutiny. For instance, it is in the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* that we find traditional account of the collection and preservation of the hymns of the Āḻvārs as a scriptural corpus. This activity is attributed to Nāthamuni who, it is said, after listening to ten of Nammāḻvār's hymns dedicated to the Kuṭantai (Kumbakōṇam) temple, decided to collect the remaining hymns of the Āḻvārs, fearing that their existence would be lost to posterity. After experiencing difficulty in locating the hymns, he decided to go to the birthplace of Nammāḻvār. Even there no one was able to help him except Parāṅkuśadāsa, the disciple of Maturakaviyāḻvār (who was the direct disciple of Nammāḻvār). According to the *guruparamparā* account, Parāṅkuśadāsa advised Nāthamuni to meditate on Nammāḻvār and repeat his decade of stanzas 12,000 times because all the hymns of the Āḻvārs had been lost long before. Following his advice, Nāthamuni received the hymns of the Āḻvārs from Nammāḻvār who, pleased by Nāthamuni's meditation, appeared before him.[24] After receiving the 4,000 hymns, Nāthamuni returned to his birthplace, where he arranged the hymns and indicated the tunes to which they were to be sung. Underlying this traditional account

[24] *GPP*, pp. 119-122

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of the collection of these works, there is, no doubt, a historical reality, namely, that the hymns of the Āḻvārs were in danger of being lost and that the credit goes to Nāthamuni for recovering them and preserving them for posterity. Credit is also given to Nāthamuni for composing a *taṉiyaṉ* for the text of Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*:

> I bow down to that ocean of Tamiḻ Veda (*drāviḍaveda*) which is a nectar for all bhaktas and joy for everyone, where we can find all [important] meanings comprising the words of Śaṭhakopa, where you have all the thousand branches (*śākhās*) of the Upaniṣads.[25]

In this verse, which traditionally precedes the text of Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, when written or chanted, the thousand branches of the Upaniṣads are compared to the thousand stanzas of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. Furthermore, this text is referred to as the *drāviḍaveda* (*i.e.*, the Tamil Veda). Another *taṉiyaṉ* is attributed to Nāthamuni's son Īśvaramuni:

> O Mind, think always of the feet of the one who has composed the *Maṟai* (Skt. Vedas) in the form of *antāti*, who [belongs to the region of] Tiruvaḻutināṭu [the town known as] Teṉkurukūr [where the river] Teṉporunal flows.[26]

Besides these two early *taṉiyaṉs* referring to the *drāviḍaveda*, we find the ceremonial recitation of the hymns of Nammāḻvār referred to in Kampaṉ's *Caṭakōparantāti* (a text which has been dated between the 10th and 13th century A.D.):

> O Primordial Light, You may go ahead of the Vedas. You may go in front of the wisdom of Viriñcaṉ (Skt,

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[25] bhaktāmṛtam viśvajanānumodanaṃ sarvārthadaṁ śrīśaṭhakopavāṅmayam
sahasraśākhopaniṣatsamāgamam namāmyaham drāviḍavedasāgaram.

Nāthamuni, Taṉiyaṉ, Tiruvāymoḻi. (*NTP*, p. 443)

[26] Tiruvaḻutināṭeṉṟum teṉkurukūr eṉṟum
maruviṉiya vaṇporunal eṉṟum arumaṟaikaḷ
antāti ceytāṉ aṭiyiṇaiyē eppoḻutum cintiyāy neñcē teḻintu.

Īsvarmuni, Taṉiyaṉ, Tiruvāymoḻi. (*NTP*, p. 443)

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Brahmā), etc., but can You go ahead of even one line of that holy one of Kurukūr (*i.e.*, Nammālvār), who is endless knowledge like the ocean?[27]

(Stanza 1)

From this reference we may infer that the chanters who recite the Āḻvārs' hymns come at the beginning of a procession; they are followed by the image, and then by the chanters of the Veda. This verse shows the priority given to the *drāviḍaveda* over the Saṃskṛt Veda. We also have inscriptional evidence prior to the time of Rāmānuja that documents the chanting the hymns of the Āḻvārs in the temple. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri in his book *The Cōlas*, Vol. II (Part I, pp. 479-80) presents the following inscriptional evidence:

> Two inscriptions of the reign of Rājēndra I from Uttaramērūr provide for the distribution of the food offered to the deity among Śrīvaiṣṇavas reciting *Tiruppadiyam* during worship, and create an endowment of land for the maintenance of three persons who were to recite *Tiruvāymoḻi* regularly in the temple [176 of 1923]. The recitation of *Tiruvāymoli* during *tiruppaḷḷi-yeḻucci* in the Śrīraṅgam temple is provided for in a record of A.D. 1085 [61 of 1892]. The fact that the hymn of Kulaśēkhara-āḻvār beginning *tēṭṭarundiṛal* was recited before the deity during three nights in the course of a festival in Śrīraṅgam is mentioned in an inscription of A.D. 1088 (62 of 1892).

Rājēndra I ruled between 1012 and 1044 A.D. The first inscription about the recitation of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* [176 of 1923] is said to be in the 19th year of his reign. Thus we can conclude the date of this inscription as 1031 A.D.

While Yāmuna does not mention the *drāviḍaveda* directly in his *Stotraratna* (stanza 5), he does pay homage to the feet of

[27] vēttattiṉ muṉcelka meyyuṇarntōr viriñcaṉ mutalōr
kōtaṟṟa ñānakkoḻuntiṉ muṉcelka kuṇaṅkaṭanta
pōtakkaṭaleṅkaṭeṉ kurukūrppuṇitaṉ kaviyōr
pāttatiṉ muṉcellumē tollai mūlapparañcuṭarō.

Kampaṉ, Caṭakōparantāṭi, sta. 1.

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Vakuḷābhirāma (Nammāḻvār), whom he calls the first Ācārya. Many of his ideas are parallel to those of the Āḻvārs. He includes, for instance, a direct translation from Kulacēkarāḻvār in stanza 26 of his *Stotraratna*.[28] Several different sources, such as the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, the 24,000 by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, and the Ī ṭ u, or 36,000 by Vaṭakkuttiruvītipiḷḷai, report that Yāmun taught the *Tiruvāymoḻi* to his disciples and one of his disciples, Tirumālaiyāṇṭāṉ, instructed Rāmānuja in the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. This tradition tells us that the third wish pronounced by Yāmuna at the time of his death was that the hymns of Nammāḻvār be made popular. Rāmānuja, it is said, taught the *Tiruvāymoḻi* to his disciples and asked Piḷḷāṉ (whose father was also said to be proficient in the 4000) to write commentary on the Tiruvāymoḻi to fulfil Yāmuna's wish. There is one *taṉiyaṉ* attributed to Rāmānuja which describes Tiṟumaṅkaiyāḻvār's *Tiruveḻukkūṟṟirukkai* as containing the import of the Vedas:

> I bow down to those feet, which are our refuge, of the one who has given the entire meaning of the Vedas in the form of the *Tiruveḻukkūṟṟirukkai* which is composed in good Tamiḻ (*centamiḻ*) for the uplift of the world, which is the great one (*i.e.*, text) and which is the non-satiating ambrosia.[29]

Tradition also says that Rāmānuja as part of his temple reform included the chanting of the Tamil hymns in the temple liturgy itself (see *Koyiloḻuku*, pp. 46-50). Some scholars have suggested that Yāmuna's and Rāmānuja's relative silence on *ubhayavedānta* is indicative of their pro-Saṃskṛtic brahmanical bias and their unwillingness to acknowledge the hymns of the Āḻvārs or the

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[28] aricinattāl īṉṟatāy akaṟṟiṭiṉum maṟṟavaḷtaṉ aruḷ niṉaintē aḻumkuḻavi atuvē pōṟṟiruntēṉē.

Kulacēkara, Perumāḷtirumoḻi, 5:1.

ruṣā nirastopi śiśuḥ stanandhayah najātu mātuś caraṇau jihāsati.

Yāmuna, Stotraratna, sta. 26. (SM, p. 6.)

[29] cīrār tiruveḻukkūṟṟirukkai yeṉṉumcentamiḻāl
ārāvamutaṉ kuṭantaippirāṉ taṉ aṭiyiṇaikkīḻ
arār maṟaipporuḷellām eṭuttu ivvulakuyyavē
cōrāmaṟ coṉṉa aruḷmāri pātam tuṇainamakkē.

Rāmānuja, Taṉiyaṉ, Tiruveḻukkūṟṟirukkai. (*NTP*, p. 722.)

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use of Tamiḷ as a language for scripture. But we see from the above references that such a conclusion is questionable, for Yāmuna has paid explicit homage to Nammāḷvār and has demonstrated his knowledge of the hymns of the Āḷvārs in his translation of half of a verse by Kulacēkarāḷvār. Furthermore, that there are so many works which acknowledge Yāmuna's and Rāmānuja's interpretation of the *Tiruvāymoli* suggest that these interpretations originally were oral traditions, handed down and recorded a few generations later. From these accounts we can conclude that the early Ācāryas acknowledged the *ubhayavedānta*, knew the hymns of the Āḷvārs themselves, and orally transmitted their interpretations—e.g., Yāmuna to Tirumālaiyāṇṭāṉ to Rāmānuja to Piḷḷāṉ, who finally wrote a commentary. Recorded examples of how Rāmānuja's interpretation differs from Yāmuna's substantiates even further this line of reasoning. Yāmuna's and Rāmānuja's scholastic energies were directed towards establishing the authority of Viśiṣṭādvaita among the contending schools. It was necessary for them to use the Saṃskṛt language and Saṃskṛt texts for this task, as the other philosophic traditions were based on Saṃskṛt *śruti* and *smṛti* texts. Yāmuna in his *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, for example, defined the *Pāñcarātrāgamas* as one of the branches of the Veda, the *Ekāyanaśākhā*, in order to defend the scriptural authority of these Vaiṣṇava Saṃskṛt texts against the accusations of other schools that they were non-Vedic. On the other hand, we might suggest that the definition of the hymns of the Āḷvārs as the Tamiḷ Veda was an implicit assumption within the Śrīvaiṣṇava community itself. In any case, the development of the concept of the Tamiḷ Veda was a slower process; because there were few outside critics who knew about the Śrīvaiṣṇavas' claim that the hymns of the Āḷvārs were the Tamiḷ Veda, the occasions for public debate were rare. Indeed, we might conclude that the authority for *ubhayavedānta* was established in two ways: its Saṃskṛtic basis of *śruti* and *smṛti* texts was asserted to establish its legitimacy outside the community, while its Tamiḷ basis remained more an assumption within the Śrīvaiṣṇava community. The Tamiḷ authority was never debated in great detail, although occasionally, as we shall soon see, a defence of Tamiḷ and the Tamiḷ Veda was necessary as other schools came to know about the claim of *drāviḍaveda*.

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Besides references to Yāmuna's and Rāmānuja's knowledge of the hymns of the Āḻvārs, we also find indications that the first generation of Rāmānuja's disciples, Bhaṭṭar, Empār, Anantāḻvāṉ, Kiṭāmpiyāccāṉ, and Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ, knew and could comment on the Tamiḻ hymns (although only their contemporary Nañjīyar was to write a major commentary, the 9,000). Consider Bhaṭṭar's reference to the *drāviḍaveda* in his Saṃskṛt work *Śrīraṅgarājastava*:

> The Baby Elephant of Śrīraṅgam Who is shining with the words of the Veda of Saṃskṛt and Drāviḍa (*saṃskṛta-drāviḍavedasūkta*), is making Himself dirty by my words. Who can prevent the Elephant [Lord Raṅganātha] from enjoying the dirt even after His bath?[30]
>
> (1 : 16)

In this verse the Lord Raṅganātha is compared with a baby elephant. Just as the elephant after his bath enjoys pouring dirt all over himself again, so the Lord Who shines (with the purity) of the Saṃskṛt and Tamiḻ Veda makes "Himself dirty" by the meagre words of Bhaṭṭar. Besides this stanza, Bhaṭṭar also refers to the Tamiḻ Veda in two *taṉiyaṉs* that he composed in Tamiḻ for Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*:

> (1) The *Maṟai* (Skt. Veda) of Tamiḻ in one thousand (stanzas) given by Śaṭhakōpa is composed in praise of [the Lord] Araṅka, Who is at a place where there are a number of gardens and rampart walls. Those hymns are nursed (*vaḷartta*) by Rāmānuja.[31]
>
> (2) The Vēta (Skt. Veda) that is with the melody (*rāga*) of the Lord of Kuruku (*i.e.* Nammāḻvār) deals with

[30] svaṃ saṃskṛtadrāviḍavedasūktaiḥ bhāntam maduktair malinīkaroti, śrīraṅgakamraḥ kalabham ka evə snātvāpi dhūlirasikam niṣeddhā.

Parāśarabhaṭṭar, Śrīraṅgarājastava, I. 16. (*SM*, p. 42.)

[31] vāṇṭikaḷum cōlai maṭiḷaraṅkar vaṇpukaḷmēl
āṉṟa tamiḻ maṟaikaḷ āyiramumīṉṟa
mutal tāy caṭakōpaṉ moympāl vaḷartta
itattāy irāmānucaṉ.

Parāśarabhaṭṭar, Taṉiyaṉ, Tiruvāymoḻi, (*NTP*, p. 443.)

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> the following: the supreme position of the Lord; the true nature of the soul (*uyirnilai*); the proper means of obtaining Him [the Lord]; the obstructions to the above as the effect of *fate* (*ūḻ*), [and] the proper life (*vāḻvu*, *i.e.*, the fruit).[32]

It is interesting to note that while the first *taṉiyaṉ* states that the Tamiḻ hymns are nursed by Rāmānuja, the second *taṉiyaṉ* lists the subject matter of the Tamiḻ Veda as follows: the nature of the Lord, the nature of the soul, the way to attain the Lord, the obstructions to this path, and the fruit of such endeavour. (We shall later discuss this five-fold division, which is called *artha-pañcaka* by the Maṇipravāḷa writers).

Finally, we shall consider one example of a *taṉiyaṉ*. Anantāḻvān wrote the following:

> I bow down to the lotus feet of Rāmānuja, who is the possessor of great fame, to obtain the strong mind to carry (*i.e.*, to understand and remember) the Vēta (Skt. Veda) written in good Tamiḻ (*centamiḻ*) by the great and famous Saṭhakōpa.[33]

Here Anantāḻvāṉ, who is one of Rāmānuja's disciples, pays tribute to his teacher as well as to Saṭhakopa and suggests that he received the Tamiḻ Veda through the instruction of Rāmānuja.

Next we find an interesting reference by Vaṭakkuttīruvītippiḷḷai in his *Īṭu*:

> Though the meaning is *vedārtha* (the meaning of the Veda, *i.e.*, this *Tiruvāymoli*) it is not self-manifest (*tāntōṉṟi*).

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[32] mikka iṟai nilayum meyyām uyirnilaiyum
takkaṇeṟiyum taṭayāki tokkiyalum
ūḻviṉaiyum vāḻviṉaiyum ōtum kurukaiyarkōṉ
yaḻiṉicai vētattu iyal.

[33] ēynta peruṅkīrti yirāmānuca muṉitaṉ
vāynta malarppātam vaṇaṅkukiṉṟēṉ āyntaperum
cīrār caṭakōpaṉ centamiḻ vētam tarikkum
pēṟāta uḷḷam peṟa.

Anantāḻvān, Taṉiyaṉ, Tiruvāymoḻi. (*NTP*, p. 443.)

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> Vēta (Skt. Veda) is like *paratva*, Itihāsa and Purāṇas are like *avatāra*, and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* is like *arcāvatāra*.[34]

The Veda, as we know, is *śruti* (revealed) and that which is considered to be without beginning (*anādi*) or eternally revealed. If the Veda is the *śruti* which is *anādi*, then the hymns of the Āḻvārs are considered in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition to be that *śruti* which has *ādi* (that is, the temporal beginning of the Āḻvārs through whom the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa revealed Himself). Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai in his *Īṭu* is the first to make this distinction: though the *Tiruvāymoḻi* has the meaning of the Veda (*vedārtha*), it is not self-manifest or beginningless like the Veda. He uses a simile to expand this suggestion. The supreme (unmanifest) form of the Lord (*paratva*) is like the Veda; the Purāṇas are like the Lord's *avatāra* manifestation on earth, while the *Tiruvāymoḻi* is like the image form (*arcā*), because it is easily available to anyone irrespective of time and place.

There are several other scattered references that deserve mention. Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār in his *Ācāryahṛdayam* remarks that the Tamiḻ language of Agastya is as eternal as Saṃskṛt.[35] The concept of the Tamiḻ Veda certainly persists in the tradition of the Ācāryas, as we see in the above references, but it is only in the writings of Vedāntadeśika of the 14th century that the concept is explicated in more detail. We have already encountered his statement that the devotees are able to understand clearly the difficult portions of the Veda only after studying the hymns of the Āḻvārs, who are the new incarnations of Viṣṇu. Vedāntadeśika devotes a whole work to the idea of the Tamiḻ Upaniṣad; this work is called *Dramiḍopaniṣattātparyaratnāvali* (The Necklace of the Meaning of the *Dramiḍopaniṣad*). He claims in stanza 2 that he is providing the essence of Nammāḻvār's works for those who are not able to enjoy the original:

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[34] artham vēdārthamēyākilum vēdampōlē tāṉtōṟṟiyaṉṟu. paratvampōlē vēdam,

avatāram pōlē itihāsa purāṇaṅkaḷ, arcāvatārampōlē tiruvāymoḻi.

Īṭu, 5:7:11, (*BV*, Bk. V, p. 321.)

[35] "centiṟattamiḻ" eṉkaiyālē ākastyamum anāti.

Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār, *AH*, Sū. 41, (*AHT*, p. 77.)

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> Having been requested (to write this summary) by the learned men who are not able to enjoy the original work (by Nammāḷvār), Veṅkaṭeśa has churned the Milk Ocean of Śaṭhajit's (*i.e.*, Nammālvār's) Upaniṣad by means of the wisdom of the mountain Manthara. He has taken the essence of the qualities (of that original work) and tied up (into a necklace) this group of gems which came out from the hundred tens of waves.[36]

The reference in this passage is to Nammāḷvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*: it has "one hundred tens," in other words, one thousand verses. Vedāntadeśika implies that he will string together the jewels "of essential meaning" found in Nammāḷvār's work just as one strings a group of gems into a necklace. In verse 5 he goes on to compare the *Tiruvāymoḷi* with the Veda:

> The first twenty stanzas condense the *śārīrakārtha* (the *Brahmasūtra* or Vedānta). These twenty attractive stanzas clearly explain the meaning of the *Ṛgveda*. This work (Nammāḷvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*) follows in its thousand hymns the *Sāmaveda* which has one thousand branches (*śākhās*) with melodies. We can see as well the *Yajurveda* in the decades which are pregnant with meaning. The *Atharvaveda* shines in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* because the essence (*rasa*) of the two is the same.[37]

Here Vedāntadeśika compares aspects of the Tiruvāymoḷi with the Vedānta, the *Ṛgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Yajurveda*, and

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[36] prajñākhye manthaśaile prathitaguṇarucim netrayan sampradāyam
tattallabdhiprasaktaiḥ anupadhivibudhaiḥ arthito veṅkaṭeśaḥ.
talpaṃ kalpāntayūnaḥ Śaṭhajidupaniṣaddugdhasindhuṃ vimathnan
grathnāti svādugāthālaharidaśasatīnirgataṃ ratnajātaṃ.

Vedāntadeśika, *DTR*, 2. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 101.)

[37] ādau śārīrakārtham iha viśadaṃ viṃśatir vakti sāgrā
saṅkṣepo'sau vibhāgam
prathayati ca rucāṃ cārupāṭhopapannam
samyakgītānubdham sakalamanugatam sāma śākhāsahsram
samlakṣyam sābhidheyaiḥ yajurapiśatakaiḥ
bhāti atharvā rasaiśca.

Vedāntadeśika, *DTR*, 5. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 102.)

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the *Atharvaveda*. Sometimes the comparison is only implied; for instance, just as the *Atharvaveda* has eight branches, so the *Tiruvāymoḷi* has eight *rasas*:

> Nammāḻvār in his Veda revealed everything to be understood in the *Śāstras* such as the following: (1) the soul (*ātman*) is different from the body (*deha*) (2) the Lord is the ruler (3) there are means (*upāya*) to obtain His grace (4) He has a supreme abode (*niḥśreyasa*) (5) sinning against Him is cause for trouble (*tāpa*) (6) there is the glory of His devotees and (7) (how by) following them (the devotees) one can remove the confusion in one's heart.[38]

And so we understand that Nammāḻvār's Tamiḻ Veda contains the teachings that are essential for the Śrīvaiṣṇava way of life in a lucid and easily accessible form. Vedāntadeśika devotes the remainder of his *Dramiḍopaniṣattātparyaratnāvali* to a versified summary of the essential meaning of each decade.

In the fifteenth century Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻajīyar begins his commentary, called the 12,000 with the following stanza in Saṃskṛt:

> Prostrating to Śaṭhārya (*i.e.*, Śaṭhakopa), I show the *Drāviḍopaniṣadbhāṣya* which came as nectar from the Ācāryas and was heard by me.[39]

After paying homage to Śaṭhakopa he refers to his commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Dramiḍopaniṣad* as coming from the Ācāryas and heard by himself (hence suggesting the *guruparamparā* transmission of teachings on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*). He goes on to introduce his commentary by saying in Maṇipravāḻa:

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[38] śāstre dehātiriktātmani tadadhipatau tatprasādādyupāye
tasmānniśśreyasāptau tadapacaraṇato anantatāpābhighāte,
tadbhaktānām prabhāve tadupasadanataḥ svāntakāluṣyaśāntau
sāraṃ vedyaṃ svavede sakalam akathayat sānukampaśśaṭhāriḥ.

Vedāntadeśika, *DTR*, 128 (*BV*, Bk. X, p. 372.)

[39] abhivandya śaṭhāryāryam ācāryāmṛtam āgatam.
drāviḍōpaniṣadbhāṣyam darśayiṣye yathā śrutam.

Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻajīyar, 12000, beginning. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 39.)

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> The Lord with great compassion in His heart for the uplift of human beings through the *Dramiḍabhāṣya*, which is understood by all (*sarvādhikāriyogya*), revealed through the first preceptor Nammāḷvār (the following): *Tiruviruttam*, *Tiruvāciriyam*, *Tiruvantāti* and *Tiruvāymoḷi*.[40]
>
> (*Avatārikai* or Introduction to the commentary of the 12,000)

Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷaperumāḷjīyar (of the seventeenth century), the successor of this commentator, wrote two independent works on this topic entitled: *Drāviḍopaniṣatsaṅgati* (*i.e.*, The Appropriateness (of the term) Tamiḷ Upaniṣad) and *Vedāntaśāstra-drāviḍāgamādi-ādyadaśakadvandvaikakaṇṭhyam* (*i.e.*, the Identity of Meaning of *Vedāntaśāstra* (Upaniṣads) with the First Two Decades of *Drāviḍāgama* (*i.e.*, the first twenty stanzas of *Tiruvāymoḷi*).

Introducing the *Drāvoḍopaniṣatsaṅgati*, he says:

> I am writing this *Drāmiḍāmnāyasaṅgati* following the path of the Ācāryas, for the benefit of those who understand the intricacies well (*viśeṣajña*). Accept this with affection (*ādara*) here.[41]

Drāmiḍāmnāyasaṅgati means the connection (*saṅgati*) of the *Drāviḍāmnāya* (*i.e.*, the Drāviḍa Veda). Then the author says:

> The four Vedas having the tender affection (*vātsalya*) as mother and father have, with the intention to help all, appeared themselves through Śaṭhajit (Śaṭhakōpa) as his four works.[42]

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[40] sakalajanōjjīvanāthamāka sarvēśvaraṉ, taṉ paramakāruṇikatvattālē svahṛdayattilē pravartippikka, sarvādhikāriyōgyamāṉa drāmidabhāṣāsandarbhattālē prathamācāryarāṉa nammāḷvār aruḷiceyta tiruviruttam, tiruvāciriyam, tiruvantāti, tiruvāymoḷi.

Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷacciyar, 12000, avatārikai. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 39.)

[41] ācāryoditapaddhatyā drāmiḍāmnāyasaṅgatim
abhidhāsye viśeṣajñaiḥ ādarādgṛhyatām iha.

Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷajīyar, Dramiḍopaniṣatsaṅgati, Śl. 1. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 101.)

[42] Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷajiyar, Dramiḍopaniṣatsaṅgati, Śl. 8. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 101.)

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This verse indicates that Śaṭhakopa is merely instrumental in making the four Vedas appear and that it is the tender concern (*vātsalya*) of the original Vedas for all mankind that instigates their second appearance as the works of Śaṭhakopa.

This concludes our survey of the basic references to the concept of *ubhayavedānta*. While this concept was never debated as such within the community itself, there were occasional attacks from outside the community. As the idea of the Tamiḻ Veda increased in popularity and the hymns of the Āḻvārs became known beyond *Tamiḻnāḍu*, there were criticisms raised against the claims that "the 4,000" was the Tamiḻ Veda and that Tamiḻ could be considered on a par with Saṃskṛt as a language of religious texts. Such objections to the use of Tamiḻ included the following charges:[43]

(*a*) That Tamiḻ is a forbidden language.

(*b*) That even the lower classes read the scriptures and hymns written in Tamiḻ and so pollute them.

(*c*) That some of the religious hymns were written by Nammāḻvār, a Vaiṣṇava saint born in the fourth *varṇa* (*i.e.*, *Śūdra*), considered to be of low standing.

(*d*) That Tamiḻ is a regional language and not understood throughout the length and breadth of the country as Saṃskṛt.

(*e*) That even Avaidikas (non-believers in the Vedas, *i.e.*, Buddhists and Jains) adopt this language to expound their preaching.

(*f*) That the Vaiṣṇava hymns and writings do not elaborate on all the four objects (*dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa*) needed for a full life, but concentrate only on *kāma* and *mokṣa*.

(*g*) That the hymns contain a number of references to *nāyakanāyakībhāva* (*i.e.*, the concept that God is the *nāyaka* (male hero, lover, beloved) and that the human

[43] Nañjīyar, 9000, avatārikai. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 36 f.)

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soul is the *nāyakī* (the heroine, the lover who yearns for union with God) and thus prostitutes such holy hymns to bare erotic feelings.

Although Nañjīyar when he mentions such charges in his *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* does not specify exactly who the critics are, we can assume that they are staunch followers of Vedic traditions who wish to maintain the exclusiveness of Saṃskṛt revelation and furthermore, do not want it polluted by the lower classes. Nañjīyar in his *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* effectively refutes all these charges and argues for the greatness of Tamiḷ. He says:

(*a*) It is nonsensical to contend that Tamiḷ is a forbidden language, because any language, whether Saṃskṛt, Tamiḷ, or some other language, is appropriate for praising God. He quotes from the *Matsyapurāṇa* the story wherein a king orders that Kaiśika, one of the devotees who was singing God's praises in a language other than Saṃskṛt, should be banished from his kingdom. Yama, the god of death, tells the king that his attitude is wrong and that any language, whether Saṃskṛt or some other language, is appropriate for praising God.

(*b*) Scriptures do not become polluted by the lower classes' reading them; on the other hand, this is actually a boost for God's apostolic work, since propagation of religion through such means is necessary for the good of the world.

(*c*) That a person is born in a lower *varṇa* is no fault of his. What makes him worthy and venerated is his erudition and moral rectitude. Nammāḻvār, one of the Āḻvārs, may have been born in one of the so-called lower *varṇas*. But, says Nañjīyar in a hyperbole, he had such learning and was so pious and venerable that even God Himself desired Nammāḻvār's vast store of knowledge and wisdom.

(*d*) Tamiḷ may be a regional language, but it is understood by all men of real learning in other languages in other

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regions of India. Such learned men who do not know Tamiḻ actually regret that they do not have the good fortune to know it.

(*e*) That even *Avaidikas* (Buddhists, Jains, etc.) used Tamiḻ as the medium of their preachings is actually a credit to the Tamiḻ language.

(*f*) That the hymns of the Āḻvārs do not elaborate all the four objects (*dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa*) cannot be considered a discredit to the hymns of the Āḻvārs, since their intention is only to guide people towards the attainment of eternal salvation (*mokṣa*), and they do not consider the other elements necessary for a full life.

(*g*) The view that *nāyakanāyakibhāva*, the concept of a lover yearning for union with his beloved, gives the Äḻvars' hymns a taint of eroticism and thus makes them inferior is not correct, for the *nāyakanāyakibhāva* should be interpreted as signifying the spiritual union of the soul and God and not the erotic union of lovers. The *nāyakanāyakībhāva* is only a stage of devotion (*bhakti*) which helps the ordinary mortal to understand and appreciate the concept of devotion to God.

Nañjīyar's defence of the use of Tamiḻ explicitly makes scriptural knowledge available to all *varṇas*. This view is opposed to the earlier view of the Brahmanic orthodoxy which states that only the twice-born may know the Vedas or Upaniṣads. Therefore, knowledge of the scriptures becomes no longer an opportunity defined by birth, but rather one defined by participation in the Śrīvaiṣṇava community.

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai also defends the use of Tamiḻ. In reference to stanza 4 of *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*, where Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār has written the line which means " the One Who is the personification of beautiful Tamiḻ and Saṃskṛt ", he mentions that certain persons had objected to the placing of Tamiḻ before Saṃskṛt, for according to them Tamiḻ was born from Saṃskṛt. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his commentary on *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* strongly argues against those who want Saṃskṛt first, since Tamiḻ is an independent language

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and its words convey their meaning lucidly and unambiguously. Moreover, he says that the Āḻvārs' words written in Tamil are self-explanatory and do not have to rely, as do the Vedas (in Saṃskṛt), on Purāṇas and Itihāsas for explanation.[44] In other commentaries his love of Tamiḻ is expressed in even stronger words. Let us consider his elaborate discussion of *Tirumālai*,19, which reads as follows:

> The One Who is lying with His head towards the west, with His feet stretching towards the east, with His back towards the north, and Who is facing south towards Laṇkai is the Lord Who is of the colour of the ocean, Who is seen sleeping on the serpent couch. My body melts. O people of the world, what should I do?

In reference to this stanza so popular in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai exhaustively explains the posture of Lord Raṅganātha. First he says that the Lord has His head towards the west because He has the responsibility for the protection of the whole world, He wants to safeguard the people in that region. With reference to the Lord's stretching His legs towards the east, the commentator asks why the Āḻvār uses the words "stretch His feet towards the east" when he could have merely said "with His feet towards the east." This reference to "stretch" says our commentator, is because the Āḻvār wants to convey that the Lord desires to extend His grace to him. Moreover, He wants to extend His grace to a person who does not deserve it. It is also to be noted that Tirumaṇṭaṅkuṭi, the place where Toṇṭaraṭippoṭiyāḻvār was born, lies east of Śrīraṅgam where Lord Raṅganātha lies, and so the Āḻvār visualizes the Lord lying with His feet (and His grace) stretched towards the east (and so towards the Āḻvār). Regarding the Lord's back to the north, the Āḻvār thinks that the Lord has a special pity for the north since:

(*a*) It is the Āryan region where Saṃskṛt is spoken (this implies that Saṃskṛt is not on par with Tamiḻ).

(*b*) It is a place which has not been celebrated by the Āḻvārs. Nonetheless, adds Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, even when the Lord shows the beauty of his backside to the north,

[44] Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam, Sta. 4. Com., p. 34.

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He is bestowing a special grace on the north. (In the Purāṇas there is expressed the belief among Vaiṣṇavas that Lord Viṣṇu's back portion is dazzlingly beautiful and its view beneficial). Finally, the commentator tells us that the Lord is facing south because, first of all, He feels guilty about having killed Rāvaṇa in order to retrieve Sītā after her abduction. Secondly, He wishes to show His affection to Vibhīṣaṇa who had helped Rāma in Laṅkā.[45]

This comment shows that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai has a high regard for Tamiḻ. His frequent and reverent references to Tamiḻ make clear that he esteems it more highly than Saṃskṛt. In his explanation of *Periyatirumoḻi* 7 : 8 : 7 by Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, the commentator states that the reason for modifying the word Tamiḻ with *cem* (good) is to denote that this language has the special quality of unambiguous expression. And in his explanation of the phrase *centamiḻpāṭuvārvaṇaṅkumtēvar* (in *Periyatirumoḻi* 2 : 8 : 2), he says that it means that God was worshipped by the first three Āḻvārs "who sang in pure and chaste Tamiḻ", implying that the divinity of the Lord increased when such great Āḻvārs sang about Him in pure Tamiḻ. Also, in explaining why Saṃskṛt is called *vaṭacol* (northern language), he says that north of the Tirupati hills (the hills which formed the northern boundary of the *Tamiḻnāṭu* of that period) only Saṃskṛt was understood, whereas in the portion south of the Tirupati hills both Saṃskṛt and Tamiḻ were understood. So, to distinguish Saṃskṛt from Tamiḻ, Samskṛt is called *vaṭacol* (northern language.)[46]

Very similar to this last explanation is the one given by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār for the term *vaṭavēṅkaṭam* (*i.e.*, the northern *Vēṅkaṭam*), which he describes as the northern place where people cannot understand the Vedas without the aid of Purāṇas and Itihāsas, while everyone born in the Tamiḻ country can understand Tiruppāṇāḻvār's poetry. This Ācārya also says that the difference between Saṃskṛt and Tamiḻ is only superficial, like the difference in the four sections of the Veda—

[45] Toṇṭaraṭippoṭiyāḻvār, Tirumālai, Sta. 19. Com., p. 82.

[46] Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, Periyatirumoḻi, 2:8:2. Com., p. 185.

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the *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*. Tamiḷ is an ancient language like Saṃskṛt; Tamiḷ scriptures have fourteen classifications like Saṃskṛt.[47]

As we have indicated, the discussion regarding *ubhayavedānta* (and the status of Tamiḷ as a language for religious scriptures) is directly relevant to the use of Maṇipravāḷa as the style for commentary. Furthermore, it is our contention that apart from the importance of *ubhayavedānta*, it is the definition of a Śrīvaiṣṇava that makes the style of Maṇipravāḷa the most appropriate language for religious instruction. Before turning to the question of the use of Maṇipravāḷa per se, let us consider in detail the definition of a Śrīvaiṣṇava and the composition of the community. The most important feature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava self-understanding is the conviction, quite radical for this period of Hindu history, that all Śrīvaiṣṇavas are equal before God and before other devotees (*bhāgavatas*). The discussion of the question "Who is a Śrīvaiṣṇava?" is especially well developed in the *Iṭu* and deserves consideration. Let us consider the following points made by Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai:

(1) *Considering others' sorrows and sufferings as one's own is an important aspect of being a Śrīvaiṣṇava.* For instance, Nammāḻvār in his *Tiruvāymoḻi*, refers to the incident in which Lord Nārāyaṇa rushed to the succour of the elephant caught in the jaws of the crocodile, and gave it salvation. That the Āḻvār refers to the Lord as "the Lord Who liberated the elephant from its suffering" (*āṉaiyiṉṉuyartīrttapirāṉ*) is due to the joy that he feels over this incident. It is the duty of every Vaiṣṇava to feel happy at the thought of any good that comes to any devotee of God. Similarly, he should also feel the effect of any harm that comes to a devotee. Here, because the harm that had befallen a great devotee, the elephant Gajendra, has been removed, the Āḻvār feels as if a harm that had

[47] Tiruppāṇāḻvār, Amalaṉātipirāṉ. Com.: Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷ-nāyaṉār, Sta. 3, p. 594.

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befallen himself has been removed.[48] Similarly, there is a statement attributed to Nañjīyar (in Praveśa 1 : 2 of *Īṭu*) about the test for knowing whether one is a Vaiṣṇava or not. If a man feels pity because of others' sufferings, he may consider himself a man of God. If, on the other hand, he has no sympathy for the sufferings of others, he should consider himself apart from God.[49] From the above two references, which Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai quotes, we conclude that he feels that it is important for a Vaiṣṇava to feel the joys as well as the sorrows of other men as his own.

(2) *Service to devotees is central to the behaviour of a Śrīvaiṣṇava.* Service to devotees is considered more important for Vaiṣṇavas than service to God. The *Īṭu* contains a number of references that illustrate this point. Everybody accepts that it is more important to attain God than to obtain material benefits. But service to devotees is even more important than attaining God. If we seek refuge at the feet of the devotees (who seek refuge at the feet of the Lord Who measured the universe by His feet), this is tantamount to our seeking refuge at the feet of the Lord. So, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai extols the act of pleasing the devotees (*tadīyar*), and calls it equal to pleasing God (8 : 10 : 3).[49]

When somebody pointed out to Nammāḻvār the devotees who loved Lord Kṛṣṇa, Nammāḻvār was filled with wonder and said: "Oh, what reverence and piety! I am wonderstruck that there still exist such great devotees! I may not be fortunate enough to serve

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[48] āṉaiyiṭar pōkkiṉa ituvum, atukkaṉṟi tamakku upakarittāṉāka niṉaitti rukkiṟārkāṇum ivar. ibbhāvavṛttiyai uṭaiyavaṉākayiṟē oruvaṉvaiṣṇavaṉākai-yāvatu.

Īṭu, 7:10:8. (*BV*, Bk. VII, p. 401.)

[49] aiśvarya kaivalyaṅkaḷil vilakṣaṇamāṉa bhagavallābhamuṇṭāṉālum inkē yiruntu śrīvaiṣṇavarkaḷukku aṭimai ceyvatōṭu ovvāteṉkiṟār.

Īṭu, 8:10:3. (*BV*, Bk. VIII, p. 312.)

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them. It is enough if I am given a chance to serve the devotees of the devotees of these bhaktas" (3 : 7 : 1).[50]

Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, while commenting on the line beginning with *tamarkaḷkūṭṭamēnāḷumvāykkanaṅkaṭkē* (8 : 10 : 10) says that what we need daily is not to see the Lord Who in His sleeping posture is so beautiful that one can never become satiated with looking at Him; what we need is to see and join the group of devotees who are losing themselves through enjoying the beauty of the reclining posture of the Lord. This situation is like that of the ravenous man who imagines huge amount of food, but when food is placed before him can consume only a small amount.[51] A similar statement is attributed to Nañjīyar in his commentary on stanza 6 : 1 : 2. He is reported to have said that if I could prostrate myself at the feet of such a Vaiṣṇava as is revered by all, I would feel as if I had eaten my fill after being hungry.[52]

The principle of *ananyārhaśeṣatvam*, that is, not considering any other deity as God except Nārāyaṇa, is a must for all Vaiṣṇavas. This *ananyārhaśeṣatvam* concludes in *tadīyaśeṣatvam*, *i.e.*, seeking refuge with the feet of the devotees (*bhāgavatas*), serving them, and becoming a slave to them. "Becoming a slave to the devotees" means that one completely submits to their will.

It is of paramount importance for Vaiṣṇavas not to worship other deities and not to associate with people who do so; (they even hope non-Vaiṣṇavas will bar Vaiṣṇavas from their company). Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai cites an example for this in his commentary on stanza 3 : 5 : 8. Vibhīṣaṇa advised his brother Rāvaṇa to

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[50] Īṭu, 3:7:1. (*BV*, Bk. III, p. 232.)

[51] ippaṭi vaittakaṇvāṅkavoṇṇātapaṭi kaṇvaḷarntaruḷāniṟkum avaṉaiyaṉṟu nāḷumvāykkaveṉkiṟatu; kiṭantatōrkiṭakkai yeṉṟu kiṭaiyaḷakilē tōṟṟirukkum śrīvaiṣṇavartiraḷilē nāṉumoruvaṉāy anvayikkavēṇum eṉṉutal; attiraḷaikkaṇṇālē kāṇavēṇum eṉṉutal, paciyar 'kaḷavaricicceṟu uṇṇa vēṇum' eṉṉumāppōlē, tam abhinivēśantōṟṟa aruḷicceykiṟār.

Īṭu, 8:10:8 (*BV*, Bk. VIII, p. 327.)

[52] " matittāṉaiu śrīvaiṣṇavaṇ śrīpādattilē talaippaṭa taṇṭaniṭṭavaṉṟu eṉakku uṇṭu pacikettāppōlēyirukkum" eṉṟu aruḷicceyvar jīyar.

Īṭu, 6:1:2. (*BV*, Bk. VI, p. 16.)

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release Sītā, Rāma's consort, whom Rāvaṇa had taken captive. Rāvaṇa, incensed at this suggestion, ordered Vibhīṣaṇa to leave his presence. Vibhīṣaṇa considered this his good fortune and left Rāvaṇa and joined Rāma.[53] This illustration suggests that a Vaiṣṇava is benefited when he is shunned by a non-Vaiṣṇava. One more incident is related in the commentary on the same stanza. A Vaiṣṇava, Miḷakāḷvāṉ by name, went to a conference for men of letters, which had been convened by the king. He was barred entrance to the conference hall and told: "You have no place here; you cannot come in". Miḷakāḷvāṉ retorted: "How can you say that I have no place among learned men? If you wish, you can test me in my knowledge of the Vedas or Śāstras. You will then realize my scholarship". To this they replied: "The reason is not because your scholarship is open to question. It is because you are a Vaiṣṇava". When Miḷakāḷvāṉ heard this, he was so happy that he literally danced with joy, casting his upper cloth skywards. The commentator points out that his excessive joy develops because he is spared the undesirable association with non-Vaiṣṇavas.

In his commentary on stanza 2:7:1, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai says that God gives salvation to devotees only if they associate with other devotees. He says that the Āḻvār loves the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, because they are associated with Bhagavān (God). And Bhagavān loves the *bhāgavatas* because they have association with the Āḻvār.[54] From this remark, it is apparent that association with Vaiṣṇavas is necessary for God's love.

Furthermore, a Vaiṣṇava should not judge another Vaiṣṇava as to his high or low birth. It is the firm belief of the Āḻvār that every Vaiṣṇava should consider himself as a slave or servant and desire to perform service to other devotees. In his commentary on stanza 4:8:2 the commentator quotes the following incident

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[53] vaiṣṇavarkaḷ aṅkīkāram perumatilum avaiṣṇavarkaḷ 'ivaṉ namakku uṭalallaṉ' eṉṟu kaiviṭukaitāṉ uddēśyamāyirukkumiṟē.

Īṭu, 3:5:8. (*BV*, Bk. III, p. 174.)

[54] 'sarvēśvaraṉuṭaiyār' eṉṟāyiṟṟu āḻvār ivarkaḷai virumpukiṟatu, emar enkiṟa āḻvār sambandhaṅkoṇṭāyiṟṟu avaṉ ivarkaḷai virumpuvatu.

Īṭu, 2:7:1 (*BV*, Bk. II, p. 234.)

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to support this view: In the *maṭh* of Rāmānuja food was being served to the Vaiṣṇavas assembled there. Kiṭāmpiyāccāṉ adopted a strange position while serving the water. When Rāmānuja observed this from a distance, he came running and hit Āccāṉ's back, saying, "stand straight and serve". Āccāṉ replied with humility: "You allowed this slave to serve, correcting his fault" (This is the same phrase as used by Nammālvār).[55] In this incident we see that Kiṭāmpiyāccāṉ refers to himself as a slave and is happy that Rāmānuja corrected his mistake and allowed him to continue serving the devotees.

Yet another incident has been mentioned in the commentary on stanza 1:4:5. Bhaṭṭar's disciples brought him the news that a Vaiṣṇava devotee of lower caste, Nampiyeṟutiruvuṭaiyāṉ by name, had passed away. They told him: "*Nampiyeṟutiruvuṭaiyāṉ tirunāṭṭukku naṭantār*" which means "Nampiyerutiruvuṭaiyāṉ *has walked* into God's world". Bhaṭṭar was incensed at hearing this form of discourteous reference to a Vaiṣṇava devotee. He said: "Don't say (the impolite form of the verb) *naṭantār* (has walked). Say (the polite form) *eḻuntaruḷiṉār* (has graciously walked)".[56] (It must be mentioned here that among orthodox Vaiṣṇava circles, even now the form *eḻuntaruḷiṉār*, a courteous form meaning "came" or "went", is used). This incident also stresses that a Vaiṣṇava should be accepted as a Vaiṣṇava irrespective of his birth.

Vaiṣṇavas should not have any difference of opinion among themselves. They should relate with one an other, always remembering that they are Vaiṣṇavas. An incident related in the commentary to stanza 3:7:3 illustrates this point. Among the disciples of Nañjīyar there were two individuals named Vīrappiḷḷai and Pālikaivāḻippiḷḷai who were close friends. Once when they went on a journey, a difference of opinion arose between them and they refused to speak to each other. After they returned to

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[55] Iṟu, 4:8:2. (*BV*, Bk. IV, p. 287-88.)

[56] 'nampiyēṟuṭiruvutaiyāṉ dāsar tirunāṭṭukku naṭantār, eṉṟu bhaṭṭarukku viṇṇappañceyya, tuṇukkeṉṟu eḻuntiruntu, 'avar śrīvaiṣṇavarkaḷuṭaṉ parimāṟum patikku 'tirunāṭṭuku eḻuntaruḷiṉār eṉṉaveṉuṅkāṉ' eṉṟu aruḷicceytār.

Iṟu, 1:4:5. (*BV*, Bk. I, p. 192)

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Śrīraṅgam, Nañjīyar heard about their difference of opinion and the ensuing silence. He summoned them and said: "It is not good for you to have any difference of opinion. Desire for money or worldly pleasure is a thing to be abjured by Vaiṣṇavas. Both of you are engaged in God's work. Is that not enough for you? It is shameful that two Vaiṣṇavas are not speaking to each other". Advised thus, the two friends prostrated themselves before Nañjīyar and departed on good terms.[57]

If one is born a Vaiṣṇava, one has the opportunity to contemplate God and chant His names and His qualities. The commentator explains this idea in his commentary to stanza 3 : 5 : 4; he says here that devotees born of pious parentage should always sing about the Lord's qualities and His adventures, such as His subduing the seven bulls for the sake of winning the hand of Nappiṉṉai, and should always worship the Lord and dance in ecstasy. Otherwise there is no purpose in being born as a Vaiṣṇava. If a Vaiṣṇava does not do these things, he will feel like a fish out of water in pious Vaiṣṇava company.[58]

Moreover, all Vaiṣṇavas are given respect; there is no differentiation according to social or economic status or even age. The commentator in his commentary on stanza 6:7:9 says that Nañjīyar used to pay special respect to his disciple Nampiḷḷai. He used to ask his other disciples: "Are you surprised that I pay such great respect to a disciple? Has not Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār said in his *Tirumoḻi* that one should not consider even a small boy who worships the Lord at Tirukkaṇṇapuram inferior?"[59] A similar incident is also mentioned in the commentary on that stanza. A savant by name Ammuṇiyāḻvāṉ used to prostrate before his disciple. When the onlookers enquired about his gesture, he replied: "There may be Vaiṣṇavas whom I do not know

[57] Īṭu, 3:7:3. (*BV*, Bk. III, p. 240-41.)

[58] 'tiruppuṉṉaikkīḻē oruvarirukkumiṭattilē nammutalikaḷ pattuppēr kūṭa nerukkikkoṇṭirukkacceytē, grāmaṇikaḷ, mayireḻuntapicalkaḷum periyavaṭivukaḷum melecuṟṟiṉairattaikaḷumāy iṭaiyilē pukuntu nerukkumāpōlē kāṇ eṉṟu piḷḷaippiḷḷai.

Īṭu, 3:5:4. (*BV*, B. III, p. 160.)

[59] Īṭu, 6:7:9. (*BV*, Bk. VI, p. 320.)

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personally. Their behaviour will reveal whether they are Vaiṣṇavas or not. In this case, however, I personally know him to be a Vaiṣṇava, and so I am paying obeisance to him". The *Īṭu* and *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* (6000) illustrate this idea of respect by referring to an incident which occurred in Rāmānuja's life. Periyanampi (also known as Mahāpūrṇa, who was a disciple of Yāmuna and the Ācārya of Rāmānuja) performed the last rites for Māranērinampi, who belonged to the *pañcamavarṇa* (*i.e.*, the fifth *varṇa*, now termed Harijan). When Rāmānuja learned about this event, he told Periyanampi, his Ācārya: "Sir, when I am establishing *varṇāśramānuṣṭhāna* (the orderly practices according to birth and stage of life), is it fair on your part to go against it?" Periyanampi immediately replied: "I am not greater than Rāma nor is Māṟanērinampi inferior to Gṛdhrarāja, king of eagles". From this conversation it appears that Periyanampi wanted to show that a Śrīvaiṣṇava should not be judged by his birth, but only by his devotion and his activities. Just as Rāma performed the last rites for Jaṭāyus (even though he was a bird) and considered him a great Śrīvaiṣṇava, so one should perform the last rites for other Śrīvaiṣṇavas irrespective of *varṇa* and *āśrama*.[60]

From the above discussions, we see how the nature of a Śrīvaiṣṇava is defined. Furthermore, the composition of the community at that time reflected this definition. We know, for example, that there was a large number of non-Brahmans in the community. The *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* (6000) illustrates this. When Rāmānuja's body was taken for burial at Śrīraṅgam, there were 700 *jiyars* (*sannyāsins*) chanting *bhṛguvalli*, *brahmavalli*, *nārāyaṇānuvāka* (all Upaniṣadic passages); 9,000 Śrīvaiṣṇavas wearing the sacred thread on their shoulders and 12,000 devotees without the sacred thread were chanting the hymns of the Āḻvārs.[61]

Just as all Śrīvaiṣṇavas are equal before God and other *bhāgavatas*, so are they equal before religious knowledge or scripture. Piḷḷailokācārya decries the efforts made by some people to go into the origin, *varṇa*, etc., of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas. He says that it is akin to the examination of God's images as to their

[60] *GPP*, pp. 237 f.

[61] *GPP*, pp. 321 f.

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metallic composition. In fact, he uses even stronger words and says that such investigation is like indulging in the utterly idle and vile comparison of the organ of one's mother with that of other ladies.[62] According to him, the whole essence of Vaiṣṇava philosophy is to conduct oneself as a *bhāgavata* (devotee) and to respect other *bhāgavatas*. One who has extensive knowledge of the Śāstras without this trait is like the donkey that carries fragrant saffron (*kuṃkum*) without realizing its value or deriving any benefit from it.[63] Association with *bhāgavatas* is beneficial even to people who are not *bhāgavatas*. It is like a field (*cēy*) that is benefited by an adjoining field which is filled with water.[64] Maṇavāḷamāmuṇikaḷ, when commenting on Piḷḷai Lokācārya's *Tattvatraya*, states that Piḷḷailokācārya has composed this work defining the very difficult Śāstraic concepts—soul (*cit*), inanimate matter (*acit*) and the Lord (Īśvara)—in a simple and clear manner for those who are desirous of salvation (*mumukṣus*) but unable to study the Śāstras because they are women and Śūdras.[65] While the Vedic tradition had explicitly denied the knowledge of *śruti* to those who were not twice-born and often to women as well, the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, under the leadership of men like Piḷḷailokācārya, desired to make the understanding of the three basic entities of existence (*tattvas*) as well as the three secret mantras (*rahasyatraya*) through their commentaries and religious treatises.

For instance, Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār says that he wanted to explain the three *rahasyas* to the devotee of average education, adding that the words of the Āḻvārs are the best method.

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[62] attai māṯṟyōni parīkṣaiyōṭokkum eṉṟu śāstram collum.

SVB, sū. 198. (*ADR*, p. 42.)

[63] 'bhāgavataṉaṉṟikkē vēdārthajñānādikaḷai yuṭaiyavaṉ kunkumaṁ cumanta kaḻutaiyōpāti, eṉṟu collaniṉratiṟē.

SVB, Sū. 237. (*ADR*, p. 43.)

[64] oṟucēy nirampa nīr niṉṟāl acal cēy pocintukāṭṭumāpōlē...

SVB, Sū. 260. (*ADR*, p. 45.)

[65] iṉittāṉ śāstrābhyāsattukku anadhikārikaḷāṉa strī śūdrādikaḷukku mumukṣutvam uṇṭāṉālum niṣprayōjaṉamā mpaṭi irukkaiyālum.

Maṇavāḷamāmunikaḷ, Tattvattrayavyākhyānam, Varavaramunigranthamālā, p. 227.

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He says that the *Bhagavadgītā* can be understood only by certain people, but the *Tiruvāymoḷi* is for all four types of people: (1) for the *ajñas* (people steeped in ignorance of the ways of God) to help them understand Him; (2) for people who are already practising *bhakti* to make them follow their ways to God more firmly; (3) for people who have already understood God and are enjoying the delights of this knowledge, to enable them to understand the different qualities of God; (4) for God Himself to understand when and how He should protect His devotees. (Whereas the three points mentioned above are from the angle of the devotees, the last concerns God; in other words, the *Tiruvāymoḷi* advises God Himself on the practice of saving others and in what particular situations or difficulties He should protect and uplift His devotees.)

Furthermore, in his *Ācāryahṛdayam* Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār says that he wrote this work to reveal the essence of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* to devotees without any distinction of *varṇa*. Nammāḷvār himself had been born in a lower *varṇa* and the *Ācāryahṛdayam* attempts to establish that in spite of his birth
26. Nammāḷvār gained a position unequalled among Āḻvārs due to his piety, devotion and erudition. The very reason for Nammāḷvār's birth in a lower *varṇa* was to raise the status of the group by his efforts and achievements, just as Kṛṣṇa was born and bred among the cowherds to save the world. Speaking of the greatness of Nammāḷvār, Aḷakiyamaṇvāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār is of the opinion that he is greater than Veda-Vyāsa who composed the *Mahābhārata*, and greater even than Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself who gave the *Bhagavadgītā* to the world. From the point of view of birth, all the three authors—Nammāḷvār, Veda-Vyāsa, and Kṛṣṇa—were born in a *varṇa* supposedly inferior to the Brahmins. Veda-Vyāsa was born of Matsyagandhi, the fisherwoman; Kṛṣṇa was raised in the cowherd community, and Nammāḷvār was born in the fourth *varṇa*, the Śūdras. Veda-Vyāsa was not born out of wedlock and was forsaken by his mother at birth; this stigma was always attached to him. Kṛṣṇa had to be separated from his mother at his birth and was brought up by Yaśodā, his foster-mother. On the other hand, Nammāḷvār did not have all these drawbacks, for he was brought up by his loving parents and by the grace of God became an infant prodigy. Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār also bids us look at the place of birth of each of these three figures.

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Veda-Vyāsa was born in a place which stank with fish, Kṛṣṇa was born in the putrid atmosphere of the prison and immediately thereafter was transferred to a place reeking with the rancid smell of butter, but Nammāḻvār was born amidst the holy and soothing smell of the *tulasī* plant.[66]

Finally, Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār says that a man born in a *high varṇa* is expected to be conversant with all the Vedas and Śāstras and to be a model of rectitude; should he not act in this manner but be instead filled with ignorance (*ajñāna*), he cannot because of his birth alone, claim to be an object of respect. As Piḷḷailokācārya, he illustrates this remark by the example of the donkey carrying *kuṅkum* on its back, ignorant of its worth.[67] If a man, born in a lower *varṇa*, through knowledge and saintliness rises above the handicaps of his low birth, he deserves to be honoured. Nammāḻvār was just such a man.

Perhaps the most interesting statement made by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār in regard to this subject of *varṇa* and eligibility to know the scriptures is the following: The *Tiruvāymoḻi* is like a golden pot, whereas the Vedas are like a mud pot.[68] It is not possible for everybody to use the mud pot (as, according to the orthodox tradition, a mud pot becomes polluted after somebody uses it, whereas this is not the case with a golden pot). The *Tiruvāymoḻi* is a scripture available to everyone irrespective of *varṇa*—this is a radical innovation of the Tamiḻ bhakti movement.

Because scripture was to be made available to all Śrīvaiṣṇavas, it was the responsibility of the Ācāryas to instruct the diverse people of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community in the *ubhayavedānta* as well as in the teachings of the Ācāryas themselves. To accomplish this task they needed a medium of instruction that would be intelligible both to the ordinary devotees and to the intelligentsia

[66] kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇadvaipāyana utpattikaḷ pōlaṉṟē kṛṣṇa tṛṣṇātatvajaṉmam.
AH, Sū. 77 ff. (*AHT*, p. 169 ff.)

[67] *AH*, Sū. 86. (*AHT*, p. 195.)

[68] Mṛdghaṭam pōlaṉṟē poṟkuṭam.
AH, Sū. 73. (*AHT*, p. 160.)

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of the community, to those who knew only their mother tongue—Tamiḻ—as well as to those who understood Saṃskṛt. Of course the Ācāryas themselves were masters of both the languages—Saṃskṛt and Tamiḻ—and so were qualified to interpret to the devotees the teachings of the Upaniṣads as well as the Tamiḻ hymns of the Āḻvārs. While interpreting the Upaniṣads and philosophical works, they often used Saṃskṛt words and phrases. These words were thought of as technical terms in the sense that the exact meaning which the Ācāryas had in view could be conveyed—or at least they thought it could be conveyed—only by using those Saṃskṛt terms. Consequently there developed a variety of prose, basically Tamiḻ in structure and vocabulary but including many Saṃskṛt terms and phrases, which came to be called Maṇipravāḷa. The most prominent characteristic of Maṇipravāḷa, we feel, is that *it is a situational language*. While on the one hand it is a natural type of parlance in that many of the Saṃskṛt terms employed are common speech of the *bhāgavatas* (thus ensuring the general intelligibility of the language), it is a situational language in that it developed in specific circumstances (to expound *ubhaya-vedānta* to a diverse religious community whose mother tongue was Tamiḻ) and was used in specific contexts (religious instruction involving the larger tasks of writing *vyākhyānas* [commentaries], and *sampradāyagranthas*, works concerning the tradition).

In conclusion we must critically examine the concept of *ubhayavedānta* and the dual language heritage of Tamiḻ and Saṃskṛt. Furthermore, we must raise the question of whether there were tensions within this heritage even in the early stages of Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition, and whether such tensions, if indeed they did exist, had any relation to the later *Teṉkalai/Vaṭakalai* split. We might begin by asking whether *ubhayavedānta*, as discussed by the Ācāryas, is a "forced" concept, and whether there really is a parallel between the "two Vedas".

It goes without saying that the "Tamiḻ Veda" is not a translation of the Saṃskṛt Veda, nor is it even a parallel rendering, as were Kampaṉ's *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki's original or Peruntēvaṉār's *Bhāratam* of Vyāsa's original. The most that can be said is that many teachings of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, especially the theistic portions, are represented in the Tamiḻ Veda, and that in

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some way, perhaps, the Āḻvārs can be compared to the ṛṣis as the instruments of revelation.[69] The commentators offer many proof texts from the Vedas and the phrases in the *Tiruvāymoḻi* and so demonstrate what they consider to be similar teachings in the two literatures. Let us consider an example lest our remark go unsubstantiated:

> The One Who is in the form of space, fire, wind, water, and earth and also in all the creatures[70] [found in the five elements], Who is within those creatures just as the soul is within the body, Who is spread everywhere, He is the One Who has been described in the shining *curuti* (Skt. *śruti*) as the one Who swallows them [*i.e.*, the five *bhūtas* at the time of deluge].
>
> (*Tiruvāymoḻi*, 1:1:7)

While commenting on this stanza, Piḷḷāṉ quotes from the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 3:14 "the One Who is in the form of *ākāśa* (space)" as a proof text for Nammāḻvār's phrase "the One Who is in the form of space". Next he quotes from the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 5:7 "the earth is the body of Him" to show a source similar to Nammāḻvār's reference to the One Who is the form of earth". Then he offers a line from *Subālopaniṣad* 7: "Who is within all principal elements", to present a parallel source for Nammāḻvār's mention of all the five elements. Next from the *Yajurveda* A.PRA.-3.P., Piḷḷāṉ quotes: "Who enters into all, rules all, and is the soul for all" to give a proof text for Nammāḻvār's phrase "Who is within those creatures, just as the soul is within the body". Similarly, he quotes from the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* 1:2: "Some say He is; others say He is not" in reference to the following passage:

> If [you say] "He exists", then all this is His [visible] form; if you say "He does not exist" then He is in the

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[69] nālvēdam kaṇṭa purāṇa ṛṣi mantaradarśikaḷaippōlē ivaraiyum ṛṣi muni kavi eṉṉum.

AH, Sū. 47. (*AHT*, p. 83.)

[70] yasya ātmā śarīram yasya pṛthivī śarīram...

Bṛ., 5-7.

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invisible form.[71] Therefore He has the quality of existence (*uḷaṉ*) and non-existence (*ilaṉ*). So God exists in the form of existence and non-existence, pervading all.

The Maṇipravāḷa writers who discuss the 4,000 hymns, especially the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, are very particular in their works to comment upon such parallels and develop the philosophic thought. For example, in reference to the preceding example Tirukkurukaip-
64 pirāṉpiḷḷāṉ demonstrates his dialectical skill. In regard to this verse which mentions the Lord's qualities of existence and non-existence, he says that if He is existent, everything is His form; if He is non-existent, He is in shapeless form; hence He is immanent in everything. The commentator follows the argument by taking both the views, "that He is" and "that He is not" (the latter being the point of view of the Śūnyavādin). If He exists, His existence is postulated by the Tamil word *uḷaṉ* (Skt. *asti*). If it is argued that He does not exist, then it has to be accepted that He exists in the form of non-existence, because in the world the words existence and non-existence are used with reference to objects which exist. Therefore, if it is posited that He does not exist here, it can only mean that He exists elsewhere. This shows His all-pervasive immanence.

When Ācāryas such as Piḷḷāṉ reflect upon the parallels between the *Tiruvāymoḷi* and the Upaniṣads, their reflections have substance and demonstrate philosophical acumen. But when they deal with the larger comparison of the Tamiḻ Veda and the Saṃskṛt Veda, their thoughts are almost superficial. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the numerical equations that are made between the two Vedas as, for instance, when Nammāḻvār's four works—*Tiruviruttam*, *Tiruvāciriyam*, *Periyatiruvantāti*, and *Tiruvāymoḷi*—are called the four Saṃskṛt Vedas. Obviously, there is no resemblance between the four Vedas and Nammāḻvār's four works, other than the number four. Even more strained is the numerical equation that first appears in Ācāryahṛdayam: "Just as the four Vedas have six *aṅgas* and eight *upāṅgas* which together number fourteen, the Tamiḻ Veda also comprises the six works of the master of the Tamiḻ language (Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār)

[71] "asti" ityeke, nāyam astīti caike.
kaṭhvalli.

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as *aṅgas* and the works of the other eight Āḻvārs as *upāṅgas*".[72] In no way can Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār's works be called an appendage to Nammāḻvār's works. One wonders why so sophisticated a thinker as Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṇār indulges in such obviously baseless comparisons. We can only say that the concept of the Tamiḻ Veda is not subjected to the same philosophical exploration as other concepts; that it is accepted as scripture, but that the question of what validates it as scripture is never seriously pursued; that even contradictory statements by the Ācāryas on the idea of the Tamiḻ Veda—e.g., that it includes all the hymns, and that it includes only Nammāḻvār's hymns—are never reconciled. Certain Śrīvaiṣṇavas (such as Maturakaviyāḻvār, who refers to the Tamiḻ Veda as containing the inner meaning of the Sasmkṛt Veda, or Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, who draws the clever parallel between the *Tiruvāymoli* and *arcāvatāra*, or even Vedāntadeśika, who says that Nammāḻvār's work takes the *essence* of the qualities of the original), understand the basic problem involved. Any further elaboration is seen as only of sentimental value.

Much more serious than the critique of the concept of *ubhayavedānta* itself is the problem of a dual heritage of two scriptures and two languages. The evidence of such tensions appear in the writings of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai who recounts the following incident:

> Once Vaṅkīpurattunampi had been to pray to the Lord [Viṣṇu]. While paying obeisance to the Lord, he stood close to some women of the cowherd community who were also praying. Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ, seeing this, accosted Vaṅkīpurattunampi and said: "Why do you go and stand amidst these (illiterate) cowherd women while praying to the Lord, when you could very well stand amidst the Vaiṣṇava *bhaktas*?" To this Vaṅkīpurattunampi said: "It is true that we have a little learning. These people may be illiterate but the Lord's grace is on them like water which flows from a higher to a lower level." Then Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ asked "What did they pray? And what did your grace pray?" Vaṅkīpurattunampi replied: "They prayed to the Lord

[72] vedacatuṣṭaya aṅga upāṅgaṅkaḷ patiṉāḻum pōlē innūlukkum iruntamiḻ nūṟ pulavarpaṉuval āṟum maṟṟai eṉmar naṉmālaikaḷum.

AH, Sū. 43. (*AHT*, p. 78.)

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(in pure Tamiḷ): 'Please drink milk and eat these fruits. Please wear this golden sacred thread. Live a hundred years. Wear this silk upper cloth'. My prayer was in Saṃskṛt: 'Be victorious, be victorious.' Then Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ said: "So you could not forget your rough sounding Saṃskṛt even at this place. It seems that we will continue to be the same wherever we are. Please come over here."[73]

This is a most interesting incident, for here Rāmānuja's disciple Vaṅkīpurattunampi (also called Āndhrapūrṇa) says that he is joining the illiterate cowherds because they are the ultimate recipients of the Lord's grace. But Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ quickly points out that even with such noble motives, the fact that the Ācārya prays only in Saṃskṛt, while the others are all praying in Tamiḷ, is indicative of a feeling of difference, even superiority, on his part, and so on a more general note he concludes, "it seems that we shall continue to be the same wherever we are."

Their knowledge of Saṃskṛt made some of the Ācāryas think themselves men of a special category. Yāmuna and Rāmānuja wrote their philosophical treatises only in Saṃskṛt; Vaṅkīpurattunampi could only pray in Saṃskṛt. Saṃskṛt training was mandatory for full appreciation of *ubhayavedānta*, and so those who knew this language sometimes claimed a special privilege in the tradition. Ācāryas such as Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ were quick to criticize such biases, for it was generally accepted by the Ācāryas as well as the community, that one can fully understand *ubhayavedānta* through the Maṇipravāḷa works of the Ācāryas, which take care to present all pertinent *śruti* passages and interpret significant philosophical concepts.

We might say that the tension in the *ubhayavedānta* heritage has its source not in the language issue, but rather in differing definitions of key terms, such as *ācārya*, *prapatti*, etc. For example, while Piḷḷailokācārya radically states the equality of the *bhāgavatas* before the Lord, Vedāntadeśika is more conservative, and cautions that people of the lower *varṇas*, while to be respected, cannot

[73] 24000, 9:2:8, *BV*, Bk. IX, p. 63.

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become Ācāryas.[74] While he says that God provides His benefits to all people without any distinction, just as the king feeds milk to his children and to the parrots in the royal palace without distinction, he does not feel that a man from a lower *varṇa* can be an Ācārya for the community. *Varṇaśramadharma* is to be stritcly maintained. A man of the lower *varṇa* may be very saintly, crudite, and well versed in the scriptures, but still there is a certain limit to his possible progress on the path of becoming a preceptor. When discussing this point, Vedāntadeśika says that people might point to the incident in the *Mahābhārata* wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa on his mission to deliver the Pāṇḍavas' message to Duryodhana did not accept the royal hospitality of the Kauravas, but instead chose to stay in the hut of Vidura, who was born in a lower *varṇa*. There is again the example of Vyādha, a man of the jungle tribe from whom even erudite ṛṣis sought clarification on certain obscure points of philosophy and scripture. Vedāntadeśika admits that no doubt there are such exceptional people who through their devotion and knowledge became objects of reverence, yet he says that there is a limit to this reverence. Regarding Vyādha's ability to dispel the doubts of even ṛṣis, Vedāntadeśika mentions the following simile: A man going on a journey through a jungle may seek guidance from a person well versed in the topography of the place as to the direction he should take and the path he should traverse. In the same way, we might use these saintly individuals born of a lower *varṇa* to dispel a few doubts we may harbour on spiritual points, but they can never occupy the position of Ācārya. That distinction is reserved for people born in the Brahmin community.

Vedāntadeśika, however, says that it is not correct to determine the position of the Āḻvārs according to their birth. Because they are the ten new incarnations of God, they are excluded from such a criterion. One might argue that it is a contradiction in Vedāntadeśika's position that he will judge Vedic preceptors like Vyādha according to birth, whereas in the tradition of Vaiṣṇavism he is not willing to judge the Āḻvārs in the same way. That a man of lower *varṇa* might be a vehicle of revelation, but simultaneously

[74] Rahasyatrayasāram, Prabhāvavyavasthādhikāram.

(*RS*, II, pp. 62-92.)

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only qualified to be a simple guide to clarify some spiritual doubts, appears as an inconsistency in Vedāntadeśika's thinking. The only way we might reconcile his two statements is to suggest that for his time he wanted to preserve the intellectual leadership of the community for the Brahmins, and was willing to overlook his own statement of the significance of Nammālvār's revelation to achieve this end. As rebuttal, of course, Vedāntadeśika might point out to us that God after all did create the Ācāryas to complete the Ālvārs' mission and to explain their works. He implies that only the Brahmins can teach *ubhayavedānta*; because of privilege conferred by birth, only they were allowed to be fully conversant with the two sides of the heritage.

It has been too superficially surmised that the later 19th century split into the *Teṉkalai* and *Vaṭakalai* schools is based on the difference of the language used by the two key Ācāryas—Piḷḷailokācārya (who wrote in Maṇipravāḷa) and Vedāntadeśika (who wrote mainly in Saṃskṛt). In point of fact, Vedāntadeśika wrote an impressive literature of *rahasyagranthas* in Maṇipravāḷa and pure Tamil (which we shall study in detail in the third chapter) and, as we have already seen, he pays homage time and time again to the Tamiḻ Veda. Both Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika, as all other Ācāryas, had a thorough training in the languages and texts of both sides of the *ubhayavedānta*. The difference between them is not based on language *per se*, but rather lies in their concepts of who is qualified to be an Ācārya, how *varṇāśramadharma* is to be related to *prapatti*, how the qualities of God are to be defined, or how the status of Śrī is to be determined. These topics we shall return to in our third chapter on the *rahasyagranthas*, and in that context consider once again the reasons for the later split in the *sampradāya* (tradition).

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CHAPTER II

MAṆIPRAVĀḶA COMMENTARIES

In this chapter we shall study in detail the commentatorial tradition (*vyākhyānas*) in the Maṇipravāḷa literature in order better to understand commentaries in reference to the *guruparamparā* tradition. Our study will include analysis of the individual contributions of Tirukkurukaippirāṉpiḷḷāṉ, Parāśarabhaṭṭar, Nañjīyar, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Vedāntadeśika, Aḷakiya-maṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār, Tiruvāymoḻippiḷḷai, and Maṇavāḷa-māmuṉikaḷ.

When the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas start writing commentaries in Maṇipravāḷa, their first subject-matter is the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, a purely Tamiḻ text, but their methods and style of commenting are often borrowed from the Saṃskṛt tradition of commentary. For instance, in the Saṃskṛt commentatorial style there is the custom of giving prose links between the stanzas, a technique which goes back to Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, and is followed also in Kumārilabhaṭṭa's commentary on the *Mīmāmsāsūtra* as well as in Śaṁkara's commentaries on such works as the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. This practice of using a link-passage that establishes the relationship between two verses had also been used in Tamiḻ commentaries on works such as the *Tolkāppiyam*, and so this convention is introduced into the Maṇipravāḷa *vyākhyānas*. Also, in the Saṃskṛt tradition the commentators in commenting on the *sūtras* use supporting passages from scriptures such as the Vedas or Upaniṣads to prove their point by establishing agreement with a prior authority. Besides such scriptural proof texts, there are attempts to establish the grammatical correctness of a certain interpretation by resorting to Pāṇini's rules. Even the tradition of *nyāya* is quoted in order that the logical basis of an argument be established on solid ground. The acceptance of *ubhayavedānta*, and the inheritance of the commentatorial tradition already in existence, led to extensive use of proof texts. The Ācāryas are

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particularly interested in establishing the parallels between *śruti* texts and the hymns of the Āḻvārs, as we have already noted, and quote profusely from both traditions. Moreover, they apply the same methods to Tamiḻ traditions, and back up their interpretations by quoting from Tamiḻ literature or Tamiḻ grammar.

48-61 = 60

The most striking characteristic of this Maṇipravāḷa literature is the technique of using similes, metaphors, illustrations, and elaborations to elucidate the meaning. Although such techniques had certainly been applied before in commentaries, their extensive use by Maṇipravāḷa authors is worth noticing. The responsibility the Ācāryas feel to instruct the community, leads them to use these methods to clarify abstruse philosophical points or just to illustrate the relevance of the religious concepts. Whenever possible they draw analogies to situations in everyday life, to enable individuals to relate religious discussions to their own concrete experiences. For instance, similes and metaphors almost always make some kind of comparison with human relations, daily activities, animal behaviour, or nature.

Similes and metaphors drawing on human nature are most commonly used. For instance, commenting on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, 7:5:5, Piḷḷāṉ compares the episode of Mother Earth's rescue from the ocean by the Lord in His *varāhāvatāra* to a child's rescue from the ocean by his mother. This example illustrates the motherly love of the Lord for mankind.[1]

In reference to the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, 4:10:2, where there is mention of a particular temple as the abode of the Lord, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai remarks that if one asks how the Lord, enjoying all comforts in His Heavenly abode, can choose such a comfortless place to dwell in, it may be replied that it is because God is like the mother who, though provided with a very comfortable cot and mattress, chooses to lie at the feet of her offsprings to caress and comfort them. So

[1] kṝṇarṛilē viḻuntataṉṉuṭaiya prajayai mātāvāṉaval vātsalayātiśayattālē viḻuntu eṭukkumāpōlē rasātalattilē nimagṉaiyāṉa pṛthiviyai varāharūpadhāraṇāy . .

6000, 7:5:5. [*BV*, Bk. VII, p. 212.]

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God too chooses to come down to earth and dwell in this temple in order to be near His devotees.[2]

Piḷḷailokācārya records from Piḷḷāṉ a simile based on the mother's relationship with her child: the good that comes from man's own efforts in the path of the Lord is like milk that is purchased from outside, whereas the good that comes from God's grace is like the mother's milk that has been given spontaneously [by the mother] to her child.[3]

Piḷḷailokācārya also draws analogies between God and the mother. He says that when man strays from the right path and forgets God, he will experience much grief, and at that time he may turn around and blame God for his own predicament. Piḷḷailokācārya says that it is natural for him to do so, just as a child who falters and falls in the street comes rushing home and, in his anger and mortification, beats his mother.[4] Moreover, he continues, it is not merely the affected person who will blame God for his predicament, but even others will charge God, not merely with indifference and carelessness, but even with the deliberate intention of giving trouble. It is as, when a child crawls to the edge of an open well under the very nose of his mother and falls into it, people will blame the mother and say she is the cause of the child's falling into the well.[5]

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[2] Paramapadattil karampaṟukkavēṇṭāmaiyālē sannidhimātramē amaiyum; rakṣakāpēkṣai uḷḷatu inkēyākaiyālē poruntivarttikkum deśam eṉkai. nalla paṭukkaiyum bhōgyaṅkaḷum irukka toṭṭilkāḷkaṭaiyilallatu poruntāta tāyaippōlē.

24000, 4:10:2. [*BV*, Bk. IV, p. 384.] Cf. Piḷḷailokācārya, *MP*, Sū. 42. [*ADR*, p. 3.]

[3] ''taṉṉāl varum naṉmai vilaippālpōlē; avaṉālvarum naṉmai mulaippālpōlē' eṉṟu piḷḷāṉ paṇikkum.

SVB, Sū. 178. [*ADR*, p. 41.]

[4] prajai teruvilē iṭaṟi tāy mutukilē kuttumāpōlē.

SVB, Sū. 372. [*ADR*, p. 49.]

[5] Prajayai kiṇaṟṟiṉ karaiyiliṉrum vāṅkātoḷintāl, tāyē taḷḷiṉāḷ eṉṉakkaṭavatirē.

SVB, Sū. 373. [*ADR*, p. 49.]

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Finally, we might cite one example from Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ's commentary on Piḷḷailokācārya's *Mumukṣuppaṭi* in which the Ācārya says that God has to be petitioned for anything the devotee wants, including union with Him, though He is omniscient. Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ observes that it may be objected that if God knows everything, He will also know what should or should not be given to us. What is the necessity of asking Him for anything? To such an objection it may be replied that this situation is like that of the child who has been sick and is convalescent: after not having taken food for days, he feels hungry and asks his mother for a morsel. The mother is deligthed to hear this request from the child, not only because the child is now in a better condition to eat, but because he asks her for anything at all. So also God is delighted to hear our petitions. Hence, it is incumbent on us to make our request to God.[6]

Who cannot understand these analogies based on the mother's love? It is not always that the philosophical point is so difficult to grasp; certainly the idea of God's descending to earth out of love for His devotees and His constant desire for their protection is not abstruse. But this is how philosophy becomes existential, so that it relates directly to the central experiences of life, and in the process makes the particular concrete incident the vehicle of a larger truth. Perhaps this ability of the Maṇipravāḷa commentators comes directly from their Tamiḻ heritage, which with both subtlety and flair had developed concise powerful images rooted in the daily events of life. In the commentaries we find that metaphor, simile, and analogy are not mere intellectual explanations, but relate profoundly to human experiences.

While it is no mere coincidence that the most common similes in reference to human relationships are concerned with mother and child (which after all is an archetype of love), the commentators explore the meaning of many other passages through

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[6] atāvatu rugṇataiyālē cōṟṟil ācaiyaṟṟukkiṭanta prajai rōgam tīrntu paciviḷaintu 'cōṟu' eṉṟu apēkṣikkum pācuram kēṭṭāl peṟṟatāy ukakkumāpōlē anādikālam prāpyāntara prāvaṇyamākiṟa nōykoṇṭu inta prāpyattil nacai aṟṟukkiṭantavaṉ atilē ruci piṟantu tan pakkalilē vantu ittai apēkṣikkiṟa pācuram kēṭṭavāṟē, śeṣiyāṉa avaṉ tiruvuḷḷam ukakkum.

Mumukṣuppaḍivyākhyānam, Sū. 164. [*VMG*, p. 383.]

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their understanding of other human relations, and sometimes they do so quite pithily. Piḷḷailokācārya says that all things belong to God, and therefore there is nothing that man of his own can offer Him. For man to think that he can offer God his soul and expect something in return is akin to a wife's offering her body to her husband in return for a reward.[7] Again in reference to husband and wife we have the following: even if a man errs and then turns to God, God will not turn away from him. Such a man is like a wife who has gone astray for some time and at last surrenders herself to her husband, craving his pardon.[8]

Father-son similes are also common. Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai explains by means of a simile the greatness of the Ācāryas, their relationship to God, and their function in the community. He tells the story of a trader who has to leave his native land and his pregnant wife for reasons connected with his business. He is away for many years; the son born to him in his absence grows up and himself engages in trade. During one of their business tours, father and son, without knowing each other, happen to stay in the same inn and keep their stock in adjoining rooms. At one point a quarrel develops between them, and they nearly have a fight. At that time someone who knows them both intervenes and introduces them to each other. The son, now knowing his father, begins to love him. The commentator concludes that the mediator is like the Ācārya who knows the relationship between God and man and helps the latter to recognize Him.[9] Another

[7] bhartṛbhōgattai vayiṟu vaḷarkkaikku uṟuppākkumāpōlē iruvarkkum avadyam.

SVB, Sū. 127. [*ADR*, p. 40.]

[8] neṭunāḷ anyaparaiyāyp pōnta bhāryai lajjā bhayaṅkaḷiṉṟikkē bhartṛsakāśattilē niṉṟu 'eṉṉai aṅkīkarikkavēṇum' eṉṟu apēkṣikkumāpōlē yiruppatoṉṟu ivaṉ paṇṇum prapatti.

SVB, Sū. 149. [*ADR*, p. 40.]

[9] oru vyāpāri strī garbhiṇiyāṉacamayattilē arthārjanam paṇṇavēṇum eṉṟu pōvatu, avaḷum piḷḷaipeṟṟu, avanum pakvaṉāy taṉakkum tamappaṉā ruṭaiya vyāpāramē yātraiyāy, avanum pōy iruvarum carakkup piṭittukkoṇṭuvantu oru pantalilē taṅkuvatu, atu iruvarukkum iṭam pōrāmaiyālē ampaṟuttu eyyavēṇṭumpaṭi vivādam prastutamāṉacamayattilē iruvaraiyum aṟivāṉoruvaṉ vantu 'ivaṉ uṉpitā, nī avaṉputraṉ' eṉṟu aṟivittāl, kīḻ iḷanta nāḷaikku śokittu, iruvar carakkum oṉṟāy avaṉ rakṣakaṉāy, ivaṉ raksyamāy anvayittuviṭumirē.

Īṭu, 1:2:7. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 96.]

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example of the father-son simile is the following: Piḷḷailokācārya describes the soul that has reached Vaikuṇṭha and is welcomed by the Lord. He says that the Lord looks at his long separated son with affection, just as a father gazes upon his son who is convalescing after a long illness.[10]

Nampiḷḷai provides another simile from the sphere of the householder. He says that in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, after Rāma had gone to the jungle in response to his father's command and was encamped with his wife Sītā and brother Lakṣmaṇa on the banks of the river Gaṅgā, his brother Bharata (to whom the kingdom had been bequeathed according to Kaikeyī's wish) came rushing from Ayodhyā to take him back to that town and install him on the throne. Rāma was overjoyed to see his brother Bharata, and nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to accompany him back to Ayodhyā. But the ṛṣis in the jungle had requested him to stay there to protect them from the demons (*rākṣasas*). To fulfil their request, Rāma had to forego the pleasure of accompanying Bharata back to Ayodhyā. Nampiḷḷai says that this incident is like the story of the householder and his wife who, though they themselves were hungry, served the food that had been prepared for them to the devotees who came seeking shelter[11].

The Ācāryas continue to use an analogy that is very common in the writings of the Āḻvārs, that is, the *nāyakanāyakībhāva*, which is the relation of the lady lover (*i.e.*, the soul) to the beloved (*i.e.*, the Lord). The Ācāryas focus particularly on the aspect of marriage. It is believed that the Ācārya performs the marriage between the soul and the Lord. Giving the *tirumantram* is compared to presenting the *maṅgala-sūtra* (the sacred thread tied around the neck of a lady by the husband at the time of marriage).[12] There is a short treatise by Nañjīyar called *Ātma-vivāha* in which this marriage ceremony between the soul and God

[10] nōy viṭṭuk kuḷitta puttiraṇai pitā pārttukkoṇṭirukkumāpōlēyum . .
Piḷḷailokācārya, Arcirādi, Ch. IV [*ADR*, p. 97.]

[11] Vārtāmālai, vārtā 61, p. 36.

[12] oṭṭiḷaiyāy mūṉṟu carṭāy iruppotoru maṅgaḷasūtram pōlē tirumantram
MP, Sū. 113. [*ADR*, p. 6.]

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is described. Also, in Piḷḷailokācārya's *Navavidhasaṃbandham* the relation between husband and wife is made analogous to the relation between God and the soul.

Finally, we must note the many similes and metaphors based on the analogy of the king or prince. For instance, Vedāntadeśika, referring to a man's preoccupation with wordly affairs when his attention should be fixed on God, says that this situation is like a prince's involvement in a miserable scandal because of his relations with maid-servants, when his attention should be focussed on his coronation date that has been announced.[13]

The Āḻvārs explore the various human relationships as modalities of experiencing the Lord, identifying themselves with the mother to experience God as a child or identifying themselves with a wife to experience God as the husband. Human relationship as the analogy of divine relationship is absolutely central to their religious perspective. Therefore it is understandable that the Maṇipravāḷa commentators continue to anchor their religious discussions on their concrete observations of human relationships.

Another common source from which to draw parables is animal behaviour. Piḷḷailokācārya, while describing the evil plight of a man in this materialistic world, says that such a man is like the frog caught in the serpent's mouth, and like the deer caught in a jungle fire.[14] Unable to extricate himself, the man cries out to God for help. God then comes to his help and removes all his difficulties, for example, extracting the poison from the serpent (which is like extracting the sting of the world) Vedāntadeśika gives another interesting "animal analogy" when he quotes the following from Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ, a contemporary of Rāmānuja, who eulogizes Rāmānuja's efforts to bring light to the world. When a lion leaps from rock to rock with effortless grace, small insets

[13] abhiṣēkattukku nāḷitta rājakumāraṉukku ciṟayilē eṭuttukkainīṭṭiṉa cēṭimār pakkalilē kaṇṇōṭṭamuṇṭāmāppōlē.

RS, Arthapañcakādhikāram. [*RS*, Vol. I, p. 47.]

[14] sarpāsyagatamāṉa maṇḍūkam pōlēyum, kāṭṭut tī katuviṉa māṉ peṭai pōlēyum.

Arcirādi, Ch. I. [*ADR*, p. 55.]

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imbedded in its mane also automatically cross that gap without any effort on their part. So also, Rāmānuja crosses this yawning gap of *saṃsāra*, or worldly life, easily through his saintliness and erudition. We too who attach ourselves to him have the privilege of crossing this *saṃsāra* along with him.[15] In *Rahasyaratnāvaḷī-hṛdayam* Vedāntadeśika uses the example of the fox caught in a river: An Ācārya is like a mother who occupies a special place in man's heart; if nonbelievers are bent upon arguing or castigating our Ācāryas' works, they will be in difficulties like a fox caught in the flood of a river and about to drown.[16]

57 Similarly, there are good analogies based on daily activities. In one context Piḷḷailokācārya observes that God at some time will take stock of all our good deeds and give credit accordingly. When the goldsmith is engaged in making ornaments, powdery gold will fly here and there, settling on the floor and other articles. Finally the goldsmith gathers those specks up with the aid of wax, and feels happy to be able to collect half an ounce or one ounce of gold. In the same way, God will say: "You recited my name" "You looked after my devotees", "You quenched their thirst", etc. He will add such items to man's score and will make man worthy of His grace.[17]

We also have the following analogy: the man who has been blessed with God's grace and gives the Lord service (*kaiṅkarya*) and devotion, continues also to lead an orthodox life with strictly regulated practices. Vedāntadeśika says that this is like taking

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[15] oru malaiyil niṉṟum oru malaiyilē tāvum simhaśarīrattil jantukkaḷaip pōlē bhāṣyakārar saṃsāralanghaṇam paṇṇa avarōṭu uṇṭāṉa kuṭal tuvakkālē nām uttīrṇarāvutōm.

RS, Adhikārivibhāgādhikāra. [*RS*, p. 101.]

[16] veḷḷattiṭaiyil naripōl viḻikkiṉṟa vīṇarkaḷē.

RRH, sta. 21. [*ARS*. p. 190.]

[17] en ūraic coṉṉāy; en pēraic coṉṉāy, en aṭiyārai nōkkiṉāy, avarkaḷ viṭāyait tīrtāy; avarkaḷukku otuṅka niḻalaik koṭuttāy eṉṟappōlē cilavaṟṟai ēṟiṭṭu, maṭimāṅkāy iṭṭu, poṉvāṇiyan poṉṉai uraikallilē uraittu meḻukālē eṭuttu kāl kaḻañcu eṉṟu tiraṭṭumāpōlē.

SVB, Sū. 381. [*ADR*, p. 50.]

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precautions, for instance like building a dam to ward off floods, so that the benefits already gained by a regulated flow should not be washed away.[18]

Yet another example of "daily activities" is found in the work of Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār where he says that God is like a farmer, because he takes the devotee's mind and prepares it for implanting His grace, just as the farmer tills the land and prepares it for sowing. He removes the effect of the sensory pleasures covering the mind, just as the farmer cuts the prickly bushes in the field. He completely destroys the effect of the sensory pleasures covering the mind, just as the farmer scorches the earth before sowing afresh. Other people's comments on the devotee's attachment (an allusion to the gossip of people which serves to quicken the process of love between lovers, commonly found in *akatturai* literature in Tamiḷ) serve to increase the growth of the devotee's attachment to God, just as manure helps the crops grow fast. God's grace falls on the devotee like the stream which irrigates the farmer's land. Then God implants in the mind of the devotee the desire for union with Him, just as the farmer sows the seed. Next God clears the mind of egoism (*ahaṁkāra*) and possessiveness (*mamakāra*), just as the farmer clears the fields of weeds. God erects sufficient safeguards around the devotee's mind, just as the farmer puts an enclosure around his growing saplings to guard them from being eaten away by animals. He personally guards the devotee's mind, just as the farmer guards the crops from being stolen. Just as rain helps the crops to grow, the Lord's blue-black body, which is like a cloud, helps the devotee's devotion to grow. Now the devotion, having taken strong root, has grown like the crop ready for the harvest. God harvests the devotee's *bhakti* by nullifying the results of his *karma*, just as the farmer harvests his crop. He further separates the devotee's *bhakti* from his feeling of self-realization by bringing the full force of His grace on it, just as the farmer thrashes the crop to separate the chaff from the grain. God liberates the devotee's soul from his body, just as the chaff is separated from the grain.

[18] ippōtu piranta yōgyataiyaik kaṇḍu varukira nīrukku aṇai kōlum kaṇakkilē . . .

RS, Vol. I, p. 163.

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Just as grain is washed to remove any surrounding dirt from it, the devotee's remaining sins are washed away when he bathes in the river Virajā (which separates the supreme celestial abode, Vaikuṇṭha, from the universe). Celestial women receive the devotee at the entrance to Heaven, just as the ladies of the house receive the pot of grain to cook. Just as the grain is made into food, the devotee is made into a celestial being. Just as the food is served to human beings, the devotee is presented to the denizens of heaven. Finally, just as the farmer himself comes to enjoy the food, God Himself comes to receive the devotee.[19] This extended metaphor shows what a master Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷap-perumāḷnāyaṇār is.

In this context of daily activities there is a saying attributed to an Ācārya named Vakuḷābharaṇa Dāsar: "When there is muddy water in a pot, people who wish to extract clear drinking water from it churn it with the nut of a tree which clears muddy water (*tēṟṟāṅkoṭṭai*). Then the muddy water settles down at the bottom and potable water forms the upper stratum. The whole water will become muddy again if one shakes the pot or pours it out into another pot. The water extracted with such care and labour has to be kept under the direct care of the householder. Similarly, the Ācārya takes the devotee who is filled with *ajñāna* (ignorance) and churns him up with the *tēṟṟāṅkoṭṭai* called *tiru-mantram*. Even after becoming enlightened, the devotee has to be under the continued care of the Ācārya, so that he may not be assailed by *ajñāna* again."[20]

Finally, to conclude our examples of similes based on daily activities, we mention an analogy given by Maṇavāḷamāmuṇikaḷ, who comments on Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār's choice of the Āḻvārs' words and their arrangement in *Ācāryahṛdayam*. He says that just as a specialist in pearls knows the order in which pearls should be arranged in a necklace, and which order will bring out the best effect when the necklace is worn, Aḷakiya-maṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār also knows where and how the parti-

[19] *AH*, Sū. 104. [*AHT*, Vol. I, p. 257.]

[20] Teṟṟāṅkoṭṭai means cleaning nut, the fruit of strychonos potatorum (This comparison is found in Vārtāmālai.)

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cular words of the Āḻvārs should be used in his treatise *Ācāryahṛdayam*, and for that reason the work shines all the more.[21]

Besides human relations, animal behaviour, and daily activities, examples from nature serve as a basis for analogies. To exemplify this last category, we shall present similes used by the Ācāryas in reference to the sun, trees, floods, and the five types of water. Piḷḷailokācārya, using a comparison based on nature says that the soul, instead of occupying the whole body (as advocates of other schools of philosophy aver), occupies only a microscopic place in the heart of man. From this centrifugal point, it influences the actions and reactions in all the parts of the body, just as a lamp placed in a central position sheds its light in all directions.[22] When describing the importance of an Ācārya for a devotee, and how God is very particular about the devotee's approaching Him through the Ācārya, Piḷḷailokācārya uses a simile that compares the rays of the sun to the Ācārya. The rays of the sun shine on the lotus flower and make it bloom as long as the lotus flower nestles on the water. Once the lotus flower has been separated from the water, the very sun that made it bloom dries it up. In the same way when man witholds from association with the Ācārya, God witholds His grace from him.[23]

One of the most famous analogies in Maṇipravāḷa literature is provided by Piḷḷailokācārya when he compares the five types of water to the five forms of the Lord:

> The Lord residing within the heart is like the subsoil water. The Supreme Lord in Heaven is like the cosmic water. The emanation form of the Lord (*vyūha*) is like the Milk Ocean.

[21] mukamaṟintavaṉ kōtta muttu peru vilaiyaṉāmāṟupōlē . . .

AHT, Vol. I, p. 8.

[22] maṇidyumaṇi dīpādikaḷ ōriṭattilē yirukka prabhai eṅkum okka vyāpikkumāpōlē . . .

Tattvatrayam, Sū. 16. [*ADR*, p. 15.]

[23] tāmaraiyai alarttakkaṭava ādityaṉ tāṉē niraip pirintāl attaiyularttumāppōlē svarūpavikāsataip paṇṇum īśvaraṉ tāṉē ācāryasaṁbandhaṁ kaḷaintāl attai vāṭappaṇṇum.

SVB, Sū. 441. [*ADR*, p. 53.]

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> The avatāras are like the flood waters in the river. The iconic image of the Lord is like the water in the pools in the river [bed].[24]

In this passage Piḷḷailokācārya suggests that the water that remains as pools in the riverbed when the flood waters recede will be easily accessible to a thirsty man. The other waters, such as sub-soil water, cosmic water (which according to Purāṇic geography is believed to surround the cosmic egg of the universe), and the Milk Ocean (which is the most distant ocean of the seven oceans that separate the seven layers of the universe), for the man who wishes to quench his thirst, are very difficult to obtain. Similarly, the flood waters, because they only occur at specific times, are not easily accessible all time. Because the image is like the pools in the riverbed, we are to understand that God is easily accessible to the devotee via this form. How appropriate this comparison between the Lord and the five kinds of water is! For it relates the locations of the Lord to the functions of His different aspects!

Just as clever a comparison is made by Piḷḷailokācārya in reference to a dam built across a river. He says that the Lord's beauty is such that all the dazzling jewels on His body are like an embankment on a river rushing with full force in a flood. Piḷḷailokācārya means here that an embankment is completely ineffective at such a place. So also, the jewels that are usually worn with the expectation of increasing one's looks are completely ineffective before the terrific onrush of the Lord's beauty.

The last type of simile based on incidents from nature that we shall consider, is provided by Vedāntadeśika when he says that if a person makes a hole in a tree and fills it with asafoetida, the asafoetida will eat away the inner vitals of the tree in due course, as a result of which the tree will fall. The question as to when the tree will fall, depends on many factors, like the stamina of the tree to counteract the effect of the asafoetida, the quality of the asafoetida, and the influence of the weather. In the same way, God's grace

[24] bhūgata jalam pōlē antaryāmitvam; āvaraṇa jalam pōlē paratvam, pāṛkaṭal pōlē vyūham; perukkāṛu pōlē vibhavaṅkaḷ; atilē tēṅkiṇa maṭukkaḷ pōlē arcāvatāram.

SVB, Sū. 40. [*ADR*, p. 36.]

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will wash away a man's sins in due course, but the time taken will be in proportion to the degree and quantity of his sins.[25]

The writings of Maṇipravāḷa literature are filled with such metaphors and similes as have been illustrated by the above examples. Again, we point out that they are the most characteristic feature of the Ācāryas' method of presentation, and give an immediacy and relevance to the interpretation of various concepts. Sometimes these comparisons to something concrete in life become illustrative or explanatory stories rather than simple similes. And very often these illustrations are drawn from the Epics. In his commentary on Āṇḍāḷ's *Nācciyārtirumoḻi*, 5:6, Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai while commenting on the term *eṉṉattuvaṉai* (which means " my Lord Who is the personification of truth ") records how he drew the attention of Nañjīyar to the following incident in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. At the time of Sītā's captivity in the Laṅkā of Rāvaṇa, the latter brings a false and bleeding head made by his magic powers in imitation of Rāma's head and tells Sītā that he has beheaded her husband. On seeing this Sītā begins to weep and bemoan the fact that all the predictions about her being an auspiciously married woman who does not outlive her husband have become nullified. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai asked Nañjīyar why Sītā's behaviour is not in conformity with that of a chaste married woman who should have died at the very moment when she knew that her husband had died. Nañjīyar replied that Sītā knew within her heart that her husband Rāma was the embodiment of truth and was invincible, and that as such he must be alive. This sub-conscious realization itself kept her alive. Thus we see an incident from the *Rāmāyaṇa* being used to illustrate the meaning of a particular term. Moreover, this passage shows a discussion between two commentators—Nañjīyar and Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai—as to how an incident should be interpreted.[26]

The last technique of these Ācāryas that we should like to point out before turning specifically to the subject of the com-

[25] peruṅkāyam vaitta maraṅkaḷukku sthalādi viśeṣaṅkaḷāle vāṭṭattukku kāla tāratamyam uḷḷa mātram.

RS, Aparādhaparihāra. [*RS*, Vol. I, p. 191.]

[26] Āṇṭāḷ, Nācciyārtirumoḻi, 5:6.

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mentary and the contributions of the individual commentators is the technique of elaboration, namely, the Ācāryas' dwelling upon a single phrase and developing the nuances of meaning suggested. Vaṭakkuttiruvīttippiḷḷai provides a good example of such elaboration in his comment on verse 37 in his *Īṭu*, a verse depicting *uṭaṉpōṭal*, the girl's going in search of her lover after their initial union. He comments that the girl's mother imagines the path that the girl has to traverse. The horror of the jungle path the girl has to follow has been depicted beautifully in the commentary on this stanza. While picturing the violent men who were infesting those jungle ways, the Āḻvār has used the expression *koḷaiyilveyyā*, which means "well versed in the art of killing". The commentator says that this refers to the sadistic quality of those people who kill, not for any gain, but for the pleasure which they derive while watching their victim squirm and cry.[27]

In conclusion we might say that the use of simile and metaphor, illustration, story, and elaboration gives much liveliness to this literature and is important (1) from the literary point of view as ornamentation (*alaṅkāra*), (2) from the religious point of view as a method of explanation and a demonstration of relevancy, and (3) from the philosophical standpoint as a method to argue from the seen to the unseen. The philosophic use of these devices is perhaps the most problematic, for while similes may provide a jump from the known to the unknown, if they are carelessly used, they weaken a philosophic argument. Moreover, there may be a tendency to reduce the entire philosophic foundation to the curt formula of a metaphor as, for instance, the simplistic formulation of the doctrine of Grace into the alternative ways in which the mother-cat and the mother-monkey hold or treat their young. Finally, one must guard against the too literal use of such devices. To use the comparison of God to the mother in order to elucidate the meaning of *vātsalya* (affection) is not to suggest that the entire nature of God can be compared to the nature of the human mother. The example is used to illustrate a particular point, not to provide a full explanation.

[27] himsaitāṉ oru prayōjaṉattaip paṟṟiyaṉṟē, atil avarkaḷ koḷḷum prayojaṉam anta novu paṭukiṟavarkaḷuṭaiya tuṭippaik kāṇkaiyāyiṟṟu.

Tiruviruttam, Īṭu, p. 266.

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With these general remarks on the methods employed by the Maṇipravāḷa authors, we shall now turn to a consideration of individual commentators and their works that elucidate the hymns of the Āḻvārs.

TIRUKKURUKAIPPIRĀṆPIḶḶĀṆ

The first person to write a commentary on any Vaiṣṇava work was Tirukkurukaippirāṉpiḷḷāṉ (also known as Piḷḷāṉ and Kurukeśa). He was born in Tirupati about 1161 A.D. (The dates of Maṇipravāḷa authors are given here, based on M. Aruṇachalam's *History of Tamiḻ Literature*, written in Tamiḻ.) According to the *Vaḍakalai* version of the *Guruparamparā-prabhāvam* (the 3,000), his father Tirumalainampi entrusted the boy's education to the care of Rāmānuja. Under Rāmānuja the boy studied Vedānta (philosophy), the hymns of the Āḻvārs and all the Śāstras. According to the traditional account found in the 3,000, he was the foremost disciple of Rāmānuja. We have already noted that he was chosen by Rāmānuja to write the first commentary. The fact that the master himself appointed Piḷḷāṉ testifies to Piḷḷāṉ's qualifications, both to his erudition and to his literary abilities. This is borne out by Āndhrapūrṇa, another contemporary of Piḷḷāṉ, who in his *Yatirājavaibhava* describes Piḷḷāṉ as a *jñānaputra* (the son of the master in matters of knowledge—see stanzas 65 ff.).

The commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi* written by Piḷḷāṉ is known as *Āṟāyirappaṭi*, which literally means six-thousand units. The work consists of six thousand *granthas* (units), each *grantha* consisting of 32 syllables. One tradition has it that because the *Tiruvāymoḻi* is considered to be the *drāviḍaveda* (equivalent to the *āryaveda* written in Saṃskṛt), the author thought it fitting that the Tamiḻ commentary on it should be in six thousand *granthas*, like the *Viṣṇupurāṇam* (in Saṃskṛt). We have already encountered this kind of explanation based on numerical coincidences in our discussion of the *ubhayavedānta*.

While the *Ārāyirappaṭi* is the only work by Piḷḷāṉ now available, there is reason to think that he may have written other works, or that he was at least a prolific preacher. This is evident because later Ācāryas, such as Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika, state

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in many places that they are following Piḷḷāṉ's ideas and sayings in a certain matter,[28] words and phrases. In this manner we also have a number of are handed down to (used in those days but now archaic), which us by others as having been used by Piḷḷāṉ. Consider this example included by the commentator Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai in his *Iṭu*. The incident referred to in his commentary in explanation of the term *kottaiyāka*, "half-baked" is this: Yaśodā, the foster mother of Kṛṣṇa, not being able to bear the pranks of the child Kṛṣṇa, ties him down to the grinding stone so that he will not be in her way while she churns the curd. The child Kṛṣṇa, having loosened the rope, crawls towards the churning pot and takes out some of the butter, even though it is not fully churned. The commentator says that he has recorded this incident as explained by Piḷḷāṉ.[29]

Since the *Āṟāyirappaṭi* is the first Vaiṣṇava commentary in Maṇipravāḷa, it is important for us to note characteristic features of its language and style. First we note that the author uses about four Saṃskṛt to two Tamiḻ words per verse.[30] The Saṃskṛt words generally have Tamiḻ endings, but occassionally there are Saṃskṛt words in Saṃskṛt declensions (mostly nouns in the instrumental or locative case). But there are *no* Saṃskṛt verbs with Saṃskṛt endings (which is the special feature of Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam and other Dravidian languages.[31] When long Saṃskṛt compound sentences are used, they are given Tamiḻ endings.

Piḷḷāṉ sets the trend for Maṇipravāḷa commentaries in using the link passage between one set of ten verses and another such set. For instance, in the decade 5:2 Nammāḻvār has described the Lord's *vātsalya* (benevolence and love) towards His devotees. In the next ten stanzas (5:3) a lady is depicted as ready to declare her love for the Lord by riding the *maṭal* (the image of a horse

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[28] Piḷḷāṉ. Piḷḷailokācārya, *SVB*, Sū. 178. Vedāntadeśika.

[29] ". . . paciyarāyirukkumavarkaḷ cōṟu camaiyappaṟṟāmal ventatu kottaiyāka vāyīlitumāpōlē kaṭaiyappaṟṟāmal naṭuvē aḷḷi amutuceyyumpaṭiyaic collukiṟatu eṉṟu piḷḷāṉ paṇikkumpaṭi.

Iṭu, 1:3:1. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 121.]

[30] See appendix II.

[31] See appendix I.

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made out of palmyrah bark: in a peculiar Tamiḷ custom, a lover rides the *maṭal* and is bruised and cut to win the sympathy and love of the beloved). The friend of the girl asks her why, if the Lord is full of benevolence and love, it is necessary for her to undergo the ordeal of riding the *maṭal*. The girl replies that, being demented with love for the Lord, she is beyond the stage of reasoning about what is and what is not correct.[32]

Piḷḷāṉ's style of commenting is most uneven. In some places he indulges in elaborate explanations, in others he gives the meaning in a sentence or two, and in yet others he just indicates the prose order of the stanza. The style has been adopted according to the degree of esoteric quality of the stanzas in question. If the meaning of the stanza is clear, he dismisses it quickly, but if the meaning is cryptic or esoteric he gives an elaborate explanation to clarify the stanza.

One of the most important features of Piḷḷāṉ's style is the way in which he often imitates his master Rāmānuja. For instance, he uses many of Rāmānuja's Saṃskṛt words, indeed whole phrases, with only a slight change in the endings to give them Tamiḷ form. Even whole sentences written by Rāmānuja have been borrowed, although, of course, Tamiḷ endings are used instead of Saṃsṛkt endings. A few instances are quoted below (only the portions underlined are Tamiḷ, while the remainder is Saṃskṛt):

(1) Nikhilaheya pratyanīka kalyāṇaika tāṉaṉāy (from Rāmānuja's Introduction to *Gītābhāṣya*, used in 1:1:1 of *Āṟāyirappaḍi*)

(2) Sarvadeśa sarvakāla sarvāvasthocita sarvaśeṣa vṛttiyum (from *Gadyatraya*)

(3) Saundarya-saugandhya-saukumārya-lāvaṇya-yauvanādyasaṅkhyeya-kalyāṇaguṇa-viśiṣṭanāy (from *Gadyatraya*).

Such profuse quoting in itself is evidence of the close relationship between the master Rāmānuja and the disciple Piḷḷāṉ, and lends even more credence to the tradition that Rāmānuja specifically requested him to write this commentary. We also see the in-

[32] 6000, 5:3:Praveśam. [*BV*, Bk. V, pp. 75 and 86.]

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fluences on his scholarship as we study the sources of his proof-texts. He rarely cites authoritative passages in his brief commentary, but when he does so, he almost always cites Saṃskṛt passages. In one place he quotes a number of lines from the Upaniṣads in support of his commentary, and also in explanation of Nammāḻvār's hymn 1:1:7, in which the poet describes God as appearing in the form of space, fire, wind, water, earth and dwelling within (the elements), just as the soul dwells in the body. In commenting upon this passage, Piḷḷāṉ presents a number of quotations from the Upaniṣads, such as:

> (He) The One Who is in the form of *manas*, Who has the *prāṇa* as body, Who is the soul of *ākāśa*, Who does all action, Who is loved by all, Who is the scent of all, the taste of all.[33]

And:

> The One Who is dwelling on the earth, Who is residing within the earth, Whose body is the earth, [yet whom] the earth does not know.[34]

Thus he cites these Upaniṣadic passages to draw the parallel between the Tamiḻ word *uḷaṉ* (exists) used by Nammāḻvār and the word *asti* (exists) found in Saṃskṛt texts. The problem of how the Lord exists is elaborated by the use of such quotations, and this also establishes the philosophical basis for the Viśiṣṭa-dvāita concept of existence (*satkāryavāda*). Piḷḷāṉ, as we have previously noted, has dialectical skill, and, like Rāmānuja, seeks to establish the Viśiṣṭādvaita perspective in reference to traditional philosophical problems such as creation, existence, and causality.

PARĀŚARABHAṬṬAR

Another disciple of Rāmānuja, a younger contemporary of Piḷḷāṉ, wrote one brief commentary in Maṇipravāḷa (although

[33] manomayaḥ prāṇaśariro bhārūpaḥ satyasaṅkalpaḥ ākāśātmā sarvakarmā sarvakāmaḥ sarvagandhaḥ sarvarasaḥ.

Chā-Up. 3:14.

[34] yaḥ pṛthivyāṃ tiṣṭhan pṛthivyāmantaro yam pṛthivī na veda.

Bṛ. Up., 7:5.

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he was a prolific commentator in Saṃskṛt). His name is Parāśarabhaṭṭar. Considered to be one of the greatest Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas, he contributed in Maṇipravāḷa a commentary on Tirumaṅkaiyāḷvār's *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*.

We know that Bhaṭṭar was born at the end of the 12th century. He was the eldest of the two sons of Kūrattāḷvāṉ or Kūreśa (Rāmānuja's foremost disciple). He was a precocious child. According to the biographical account in the *Guruparamparā-prabhāvam*, he questioned his father at the age of five about the propriety of the expression *ciṟumāmaṇiccar*, which he happened to hear when his father was chanting one of Nammāḷvār's hymns.[35] The expression, which means "little big men", appeared contradictory to Bhaṭṭar, and so he requested an explanation. His father mollified him by explaining that some men though small in stature, were great in knowledge. Bhaṭṭar was also said to have a prodigious memory, being able to memorize anything even if he heard it recited only once. To understand the contribution of this key Śrīvaiṣṇava thinker, one must analyze his extensive works in Saṃskṛt. This certainly is not our task here; we are rather interested in his one Maṇipravāḷa commentary. Although his only extant commentary is on Tirumaṅkaiyāḷvār, we find frequent references in the *Irupattināḷāyirappaṭi* (24,000) and the *Muppattiyāṟāyirappaṭi* (36,000) to Bhaṭṭar's views regarding points in the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḷvār. Such references (which are over one hundred in number) are traditionally known as *Bhaṭṭar-nirvāham*. Here is an example: speaking about stanza 1:6:1 of *Tiruvāymoḻi*, Bhaṭṭar is reported to have observed that a devotee could offer any flower and any kind of incense to God provided it is offered with true bhakti. His disciple immediately referred to the prohibition in the Śāstras of the use of flowers with thorns for worship. Bhaṭṭar answered the point by saying that such a prohibition should not be attributed to the pain a thorny flower could inflict on the Lord, but to the fear that it could inflict pain on a true devotee when he picks such a flower to offer to God. So far as God is concerned, it does not matter whether the flower offered is with or without thorns. It is all the same to Him. In fact, Bhaṭṭar says that the Āḻvārs refer to all kinds of flowers—

[35] *GPP*, pp. 232 f.

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tuḷāy, kūviḷai, muḷaṛi (a flower with thorns), and *āmpal*—as offerings to God. God Himself does not disdain any kind of offering, he says. Did He not accept the humble *kūraikkiḻaṅku* (a kind of tuber) in *varāhāvatāra* (His incarnation as boar)?[36]

The peculiarity of Bhaṭṭar's Maṇipravāḷa commentary lies in the fact that he has taken only one of the thirty stanzas comprising the *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* (the 21st stanza), and in dealing with it has given the meaning of the entire thirty stanzas. He attempts various types of classifications for Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār's work. For instance, he groups the thirty stanzas into three parts of ten stanzas each, and avers that the first ten stanzas stand for devotion (*bhakti*), the second ten for surrender (*prapatti*), and the last ten for Lakṣmī as the mediatrix (*puruṣakāra*).[37] He also proposes another classification, namely, that the first ten stanzas concern the *tirumantram*, the second ten *dvayam*, and the third ten the *caramaślokam*. And yet another classification is provided: the first ten stanzas deal with *om*, the second with *namaḥ*, and the third ten with *nārāyaṇāya*.

In reference to language and style it is impossible on the strength of a commentary on only one verse to estimate the relative numbers of Saṃskṛt and Tamiḻ words used, or any speciality of method apart from the above mentioned interest in classifications and the particular care to gloss each word individually. Usually he provides proof texts from *śruti* and *smṛti* sources—*Atharvaśākhā, Chāndogyopaniṣad, Bhagavadgītā*—as well as profuse quotations from the Āḻvārs' hymns.

NAÑJĪYAR

Nañjīyar, who can be assigned the dates 1182-1287 A.D., is described in the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* as a "Vedāntin" belonging to an Advaita family residing in Melkote in Mysore state. According to the account, he was a renowned scholar well-versed in all the Śāstras, so that the great Parāśarabhaṭṭar of Śrīraṅgam came to hear of this man's scholarship and desired to have

[36] 24000, 1:6:1. 36000, 1:6:1. [*BV*, Bk. I, pp. 244-5.]

[37] Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam, Com: Bhaṭṭar, p. 165.

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such a learned person converted to Viśiṣṭādvaita. Consequently Bhaṭṭar went to Melkote with that very purpose in mind, and won the Vedāntin's allegiance. After Bhaṭṭar returned to Śrīraṅgam, the Vedāntin preached and practised Viśiṣṭādvaita in his native town, Melkote. He became known as Nañjīyar in the following way. One day the Vedāntin was grieved to learn that during his absence from home on an errand his two wives had turned away some Vaiṣṇavas who had come there seeking food. The Vedāntin was so upset by this that he immediately renounced married life (*grhasthāśrama*) and became an ascetic (*sannyāsin*). He divided his property into three parts, gave two parts to his two wives, retaining one part to offer to his mentor (Bhaṭṭar). He left Melkote and proceeded to Śrīraṅgam to practise Viśiṣṭādvaita at his master's feet. On seeing the Vedāntin clad in *kāṣāya* (ascetic's garb), Bhaṭṭar called him "Nañjīyar)" (*i.e.*, our *jīyar* or ascetic).

While, as we have seen, his master Bhaṭṭar wrote only one Maṇipravāḷa commentary, Nañjīyar has many such commentaries to his credit. Perhaps we may appropriately compare this division of labour to that between Rāmānuja and Piḷḷāṉ. The former was totally engaged in establishing the Saṃskṛt foundation for Viśiṣṭādvaita but encouraged his disciple Piḷḷāṉ to write a Tamiḻ (Maṇipravāḷa) commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. So too, Bhaṭṭar, who devoted himself primarily to developing the Saṃskṛt side of Viśiṣṭādvaita, may have encouraged his disciple Nañjīyar to add to the corpus of commentaries on the hymns of the Āḻvārs.

Nañjīyar wrote five Maṇipravāḷa commentaries:

(*a*) A commentary on *Tiruvāymoḻi* called the *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* (the nine thousand *granthas*)

(*b*) A commentary on *Tiruppāvai* by Āṇḍāḷ.

(*c*) A commentary on *Antāti* by Poykai, Pūtam, and Pēy.

(*d*) A commentary on *Kaṇṇiṉuṇciṟuttāmpu* by Madhurakaviyāḻvār.

(*e*) A commentary on *Tiruppallāṇṭu* by Periyāḻvār.

Comparing Nañjīyar's language and style to Piḷḷāṉ's, we find the following differences. Nañjīyar uses more Tamiḻ words:

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in fact, the proportion is about five Tamiḻ words to three Saṃskṛt words per verse. He does not use Saṃskṛt endings, as did his predecessor, and he avoids long compound sentences in favour of simple sentences. Whereas Piḷḷāṉ used a link line between every decade, Nañjīyar inserts such link lines between every two stanzas to provide for continuity and to introduce the next stanza. Furthermore, Nañjīyar is very meticulous about giving glosses as well as giving the reasoning behind the suggested meaning. For instance, in his explanation for stanza 5:8:5 of *Tiruvāymoḻi*, he states in his work *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* that the word *aḻuvaṉ* in the original text means "weeping (like a small boy)". For the term *toḻuvaṉ*, which appears in the stanza, he says that it means worshipping [God] like a great seer (*pēraṛivāḷar*)". The term *āṭikkāṇpaṉ* in the original work is glossed as "dancing like people in ecstasy". *Pāṭi alaṟṟuvaṉ* is glossed as "singing, in a delirious mood, the praise of God". Nammāḻvār says that all these actions are the result of *viṉai* (sin). The commentary glosses *viṉai* by *bhakti* (which usually means devotion) to show that *bhakti* is equivalent to sin in that both bring on results.[38]

Besides providing glosses on almost all words, Nañjīyar furnishes permutations and combinations of the words discussed. In his commentary on *Kaṇṇiṇuṇciṟuttāmpu* we find in the very beginning an example of this style, for he takes up the compound word *kaṇṇiṇuṇciṟuttāmpu* and deals with different combinations of its elements. First he describes *kaṇṇittāmpu* as denoting one (here Kṛṣṇa) tied up by ladies with a rope full of knots. Because the rope is full of knots, the Āḻvār feels that the Lord's body may be hurt. Next he takes up the combination *nuṇṭāmpu* (thin rope) The Āḻvār voices concern: because the rope is small, he feels that it will hurt the Lord, as it will not be long enough to encircle the Lord and the grinding stone too. In this same stanza Nañjīyar in dealing with the phrase *kaṭṭuṇṇappaṇṇiya* gives one of his finest pieces of commentary. *Kaṭṭuṇṇapaṇṇiya* means "one who allowed himself to be tied". The rope which Yaśodā brings to tie up the Lord (Kṛṣṇa) is short, the grinding stone is too big for the rope, and therefore the rope will not be long enough to tie up the child (Kṛṣṇa). If He is not tied up, He will run away. The mother

[38] 9000, 5:8:5. [*BV*, Bk. V, p. 349.]

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(Yaśodā) is thus in a dilemma. The Lord, realizing her predicament, causes Himself to be bound (*kaṭṭuṇṇappaṇṇiya*). Also by His grace He makes the small rope not only sufficient but unnecessarily long for the purpose at hand. Such are the special features of Nañjīyar's style.[39]

While Piḷḷāṉ, Bhaṭṭar, and Nañjīyar all represent the early development of the *vyākhyāna* tradition, its "maturity" must be studied in the commentaries of Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai and Periya vāccāṉpiḷḷai, who were contemporaries and the disciples of Nampiḷḷai.

NAMPIḶḶAI

Nampiḷḷai was a famous orator and a master commentator. According to the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, he was born as Varadarāja in Nampūr, and lived south of Śrīraṅgam at the beginning of the 13th century.[40] When he grew up, he used to attend regularly the discourses of Nañjīyar at Śrīraṅgam. Once when Nañjīyar asked his disciples for someone who could legibly copy his commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi* (9,000), the disciples suggested Varadarāja of Nampūr. Varadarāja agreed, but while carrying the manuscript home, he lost it in the Kāverī as he was crossing the deep river. Upset at losing the text of this important work entrusted to him, he started writing from memory. When he handed over the book to Nañjīyar, Nañjīyar noticed that, while the theme of the text was the same, the vocabulary and its accompanying explanation based on Tamiḻ grammar although often good, differed considerably from the original. When Varadarāja with hesitation confessed the incident, Nañjīyar, pleased with the resultant work, embraced him, calling him "Our Son" (Nampiḷḷai); later he appointed him his successor. It was from this time onward that Nampiḷḷai started giving discourses in the Śrīraṅgam temple that were attended by vast numbers of people. At one time even Tōḷappar (the grandson of Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ), the chief Ācārya of Śrīraṅgam, who had a large number of disciples, grew jealous of Nampiḷḷai's popularity. However, eventually he

[39] kaṇṇinuṇ ciṟuttāmpu, Com. Nañjīyar, pp. 32, 33.

[40] *GPP*, pp. 364-65.

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acknowledged his greatness saying: "I was Ācārya for some Śrīvaiṣṇavas but you are *lokācārya* (*i.e.*, Ācārya of the world)". This is how Nampiḷḷai received the title Nampiḷḷailokācārya[41]. Although Nampiḷḷai himself did not commit to writing his discourses on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, he is extremely important as the main source for Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai's commentary: hence our digression to establish his place in the *guruparamparā* (the succession of teachers).

VAṬAKKUTTIRUVĪTIPPIḶḶAI

Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai lived between 1217-1312 A.D. Named after the street on which he lived in Śrīraṅgam (*Vaṭakkutiruvīti*, northern street), this Ācārya is well known for preserving the discourses of his teacher Nampiḷḷai on Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Besides being Nampiḷḷai's disciple, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai was the father of Piḷḷailokācārya, the author of numerous *rahasyagranthas*, and Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār, who wrote the *Ācāryahṛdayam*. Thus we see that there was a chain of teachers and pupils, namely, direct influence exerted by Nañjīyar on Nampiḷḷai, by Nampiḷḷai on Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, and by the latter on his elder son Piḷḷailokācārya who in turn influenced his brother, Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār. Maṇipravāḷa commentaries (and treatises) are a product of the *guruparamparā*, which involved the intellectual interaction of key Ācāryas in each generation and the personal transmission of their ideas to the next generation who refined them and often recorded them if this had not already been done. Consequently, this Maṇipravāḷa literature must be analyzed in the context of the closeness of the Śrīvaiṣṇava community.

In fact, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai's commentary records a commentatorial tradition back to Bhaṭṭar, who, as we recall, was Nañjīyar's teacher. He records that Bhaṭṭar, when giving a discourse on the Tiruvāymoḷi, refers in a particular context to the separation of lovers, and says that Nammāḻvār remarks in stanza

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[41] tuṇṇu pukaḻ kantāṭait
tōḷappar tam ukappāl.
eṇṇa ulakāriyaṇō
eṇṇuraikka
Manavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ, Upadeśaratnamālai, Sta. 51.

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1:4:4 that "even after seeing my change of colour, *i.e.*, my paleness due to separation, is it proper for God to leave me alone?" At this point he records that one person raised the objection that God in separation could not have seen the change of colour, since it takes place only after separation; instead of *kaṇṭiṟaṅki* (after seeing) in the stanza, it should read *kēṭṭiṟaṅki* (after hearing). Bhaṭṭar answers this in the following manner. The *nāyakī* (beloved) was not able to bear even a moment of separation by losing the touch of her husband's hands in embrace, and even at this thought her colour changed immediately, as could be seen by the husband. That is the inner meaning of the words of the Āḻvār according to Bhaṭṭar. To strengthen his argument, he gives two quotations—one from *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and another from *Kuṟuntokai*[42] (hence again demonstrating the depth of his knowledge of Tamiḻ). The exactness of the details of the explanation, as well as the appropriate quotations, shows how carefully the oral commentatorial tradition is preserved and handed down. In another place, 10:2:5, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai records an interesting conversation which took place between Bhaṭṭar and Nañjīyar about the greatness of the name of the Lord. Nañjīyar is said to have asked whether personal purity is a *sine qua non* for uttering the name of the Lord. Bhaṭṭar replies that making personal piety a precondition is like insisting on a purificatory bath in some unknown backwaters before having a bath in the Holy Ganges, thus indicating his view that chanting the name of the Lord not only ensures salvation hereafter, but also personal purity here and now.[43]

Thus we see how Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai preserves many "thoughts" on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*—whether those of Bhaṭṭar, Nañjīyar, or Nampiḷḷai—that might otherwise have eventually been lost. He has been accused of simply recording the thoughts of others, but he is a master at synthesizing all prior contributions into a cohesive commentary; we must not belittle his role.

[42] Bhaṭṭarai oru Tamiḻaṉ 'kēṭṭiraṅki' eṉṉāṯē 'kaṇṭiraṅki' eṉṉapperumō? eṉṉa aṉaitta kai nekiḻttavaḻavilē veḻutta paṭi kaṇṭāl piriyattakātu eṉṟu irukka vēṇṭāvō? Ippaṭi kūṭumō? eṉṉil 'puḷḷīṯyādi,' 'kātalar toṭuvuḻīṯyāti,' uṉakku ittamiḻpōtātō? eṉṟār.

Īṭu, 1:4:4. [*BV*, Bk. I, pp. 185 f.]

[43] Īṭu, 10:2:5. [*BV*, Bk. X, p. 52.]

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Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai wrote two commentaries. The most important is his explanation of Nammāḷvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*, which is called the *Īṭu* (36,000), and is the longest commentary on that work. Of less significance is his commentary on *Tiruviruttam* of Nammāḷvār. The name *Īṭu* has in later tradition been interpreted in various ways. The first is *īṭupaṭutal*, which denotes "losing one's heart to".'It implies that the author was attracted by the Āḷvār's hymns, and his outpourings became the commentary. Another meaning is "equal to" or "similar"; for the work is considered to be similar to the *Śrutaprakāśikā*, the commentary written in Saṃskṛt on the *Śrībhāṣya* of Rāmānuja. Just like the *Śrutaprakāśikā*, the *Īṭu* contains thirty-six thousand *granthas* (hence another "numerical relationship" inherited from the *ubhayavedānta* discussions). Then there is a third interpretation, namely, that this is a mere record, not an original piece of writing. *Īṭu* (when formed from the root *Īṭu* spelled with a short "i"), means "placing or keeping a thing", and so the author is said to have placed or kept the record straight without additions of his own.

Turning now to the question of language and style, we find that this commentator uses more Tamiḷ words than Saṃskṛt words, the ratio is about 2 to 1. Because so much of his commentary is a record of his master Nampiḷḷai, we can easily understand his dominant use of Tamiḷ, as this work was directly based on oral teaching for the community. Furthermore, the great many colloquial words and phrases encountered can be attributed to the same cause, and they give some indication of the daily speech of Nampiḷḷai's days. This is not to say that the *Īṭu* suffered in literary value; on the contrary, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai often uses elegant Tamiḷ as well as Saṃskṛt; and literary beauty is one of the most distinctive features of this commentary. The author demonstrates a great command of vocabulary, both casual and formal. The complex glosses are evidence of this point: for example, let us consider his gloss on the name *grāmaṇi*. The word *grāmaṇi* literally means the leader or headman of the village. In stanza 3:5:4 of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* Nammāḷvār has decried persons who, though born as Śrīvaiṣṇavas, do not realize or sing the greatness of God. The commentator says that this is like an unlettered person trying to invade a meeting of pious Vaiṣṇava devotees.

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He adds the following story in illustration: a few Vaiṣṇava devotees were sitting under a *puṉṉai* tree (the tree supposed to be very dear to Kṛṣṇa). The shade of the *puṉṉai* tree was already accomodating all the devotees it could, but a rough person came and crowded in with them. The implication of this story is that this rough person has no business to be in that place, and so, in the same way, people who do not realize the greatness of God have no place in Gokulam.[44] In describing the person who crowded into the devotees' meeting, the commentator says that he was rugged in appearance and manner, with wisps of hair sprouting out from his shoulder-blades, and that he had a long rough cloth (*iraṭṭaikcḷ*) tied around his head. He calls this intruder a *grāmaṇi*. The term *grāmaṇi* appears also in another place in his commentary, and means people who inflict cruelty on others though appearing pious (2:1:1).[45] In another context he says that the *grāmaṇi* decoys gullible people to his house and divests them of their property and belongings by pretending that he will safeguard them (4:9:6).[46] In yet another place he says that the *grāmaṇi* is always filled with jealousy, does not like to hear about the prosperity of his fellow *grāmaṇis*, and, in fact, will fight on account of this. *Grāmaṇis* thus end up destroying each other (4:10:7; 7:5:6). From the above discussion we infer that the term *grāmaṇi* was applied in those days to a person who puts on a sanctimonious appearance, performs all the outward rituals as would an orthodox

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[44] tiruppuṉṉikkīḻē oruvar irukkumiṭattilē nammutalikaḷ pattupēr kūṭa nerukkik koṇṭu irukkacceytē Grāmaṇikaḷ mayireḻunta picalkaḷum periya vaṭivukaḷum mēlē cuṟṟiṉa rattai kaḻumāy iṭaiyilē pukuntu nerukkumāpōlē kāṇ ' eṉṟu piḷḷaippiḷḷai.

Īṭu, 3:5:4. [*BV*, Bk. III, p. 160.]

[45] yāgaṅkaḷum paṉṉi pavitraṅkaḷum muṭintiṭṭu ' Dhārmikar ' eṉṟu pāṭit tiriyāṉiṟpārkaḷirē parahimsai paṇṇānirkac ceytē Grāmaṇikaḷ.

Īṭu., 2:1:2. [*VB*, Bk. III, p. 160].

[46] Oru dēcattilē varttiyāniṉṟal ōrapāśrayattaip paṟṟi irukkavēṇum eṉṟu grāmaṇipāṭē ceṉṟu cērum ivaṉ sādhu eṉṟu tōṟṟinavārē uṉṉai iṉṉārum iṉṉārumāka iṉṉapaṭi coṉṉārkaḷī eṉṉum. avaṉ bhītaṉāy ' ivaṉ namakku rakṣakaṉ ' eṉṟu viśvasittapaṭiyālē atukkup parikāram eṉ eṉṟu ivantaṉṉayē kēṭkum. uṉakku oṉṟu vantāl collalāvatu illātapaṭi eṉṉakattilē uṉak. kuḷḷa arthattaiyum pōkaṭṭu uṉ kṣētrattaiyum eṉ pērilē tiriyaviṭṭu vai-

Īṭu, 4:9:6. [*BV*, Bk. IV, p. 346.]

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religious person, but harbours hatred towards his fellow human beings at the same time. Such *grāmaṇis* must have existed in all communities—especially among the higher castes (which monopolized religious worship and ritual).

Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai makes much use of the kinds of simile, metaphor, and illustration that we noted above which were so typical of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas. We cannot say whether these comparisons and stories are his original contribution or have come from his teacher Nampiḷḷai, who is said to have been a master at such exemplification. We can only observe that the brilliant illustrations in this commentary lend the work a literary flair as well as a touch of realism. We shall explore now, however, in more detail a closely related matter, namely, explanation via the description of social customs, a device that is elaborately used in these commentaries. For instance, in stanza 1:7:2 Nammāḻvār has referred to God as a treasure (*vaippu*). The commentator Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai elaborates the term as a "treasure that is safeguarded by sacrificing a goat". From this definition it is apparent that the custom of sacrificial offering for safe maintenance or improvement in health or status must have existed in those days (as it still does now in remote communities).[47] In stanza 4:6:11 the word *nōy* occurs. The commentator says that there is a custom among Tamiḻians that is known by the term *veṟivilakku*. When a girl is completely infatuated with a boy and because of this is unable to eat, becoming listless and apathetic, her family under the impression that she is possessed by some evil spirit or evil spell (*veṟi*), tries to exorcise the spirit by sacrificing goats or by forcing her to drink liquor. At this point a girl friend intervenes and points out that there is no question of possession by a spirit, but that rather she is possessed by true love. This act of the girl friend is called *veṟivilakku* (*vilakku* means clearing or stopping; therefore the term means "clearing the spirit", or "stopping the spell"). *Veṟivilakku, pūttarupuṇarcci* (helping the beloved to pluck a flower from a branch out of her reach while

[47] āṭu aṟuttu baliyiṭṭu arappaiyākki iṣṭa viniyōgārhamāmpaṭi kṣemitu vaikkum nidhi pōlē ivaṉukku niṉaittavakai yellām anubhavikkalāmapaṭi taṉṉai iṣṭa viniyōgārhamākki vaikkum eṉṟuiṭṭu prāpyatvam colkiṟatu.

Iṭu, 1:7:2. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 293.]

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meeting her for the first time), *kaḷiṟutarupuṇarcci* (loving a boy who has saved her from the onrush of an elephant), *puṉaltarupuṇarcci* (loving a boy who has saved her from drowning in the water), or *maṭalēṟutal* (a boy's riding a horse made of palmyrah bark to win the sympathy of the girl he loves) were all conventions of ancient Tamiḻ literature, and often reflect real Tamiḻ customs. The commentator often uses such examples (see commentary to 4:4:6, 5:3:8, etc.), but when he mentions these ancient Tamiḻ customs, he uses his own style and mixes a number of Saṃskṛt words in his explanation.[48]

Explanation via references to social customs is closely related to Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai's use of proof-texts from Tamiḻ literature. Caṅkam works, *Tirukkuṟaḷ*,[49] Kampaṉ's *Rāmāyaṇam*,[50] Tamiḻ grammars—all are amply quoted. We are told that when the commentator was explaining to an audience the term *eṉṉīrmaikaṇṭiraṅki* (the change of colour due to separation from one's beloved), a Tamiḻ scholar objected to the use of the term *kaṇṭiraṅki* (we have already referred to this incident above). The commentator in meeting the objection refers to a passage from the *Caṅkam* work *Kuṟuntokai*. We also find that he refers to stanzas from the famous Tamiḻ work, the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*. In stanza 6:7:1 where Nammāḻvār had mentioned how the Lord appears to the devotee in the different forms of matter—like rice when he eats it, like water when he drinks it, like betel leaves when he starts munching them—the commentator draws a parallel to the stanza in *Tirukkuṟaḷ* wherein the beloved appears to her lover in whatever form he chooses to desire at that moment. Or he draws from Kampaṉ's *Rāmāyaṇam* to give a parallel description for Nammāḻvār's use of the term *kiṭantavāṟu* (which refers to the

[48] *BV*, Bk. IV, p. 128, 194 and 198. *BV*, Bk. V, p. 134.

[49] 'vēṭṭapoḻutiṉ avai avai pōlumē toṭṭār katuppiṉāḷ tōḷ'.
(Kuṟaḷ-Kāmattuppāl 1105) Īṭu, 6:7:1. [*BV*, Bk. VI, p. 282.]
alareḻa āruyir ṉiṟkum aṯanai palar aṟiyār pākkiyattāl.
(Kuṟaḷ-Kāmattuppāl 1141). Īṭu, 7:3:10. [*BV*, Bk. VIII, p. 147.]

[50] 'karuṇaiyeṉuṅkaṭal karuṅkaṭalai nōkkik kiṭantatē.
(Kambaṉ, Irāmāyaṇam, yuttakāṇṭam, 6:2.)
Īṭu, 5:10:6, [*BV*, Bk. V, p. 70.]

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recumbent posture of the Lord) in stanza 5:10:6. Commenting on Nammāḷvār's description of how Laṅkā was consumed by a fire set by Hanumān, he explains that this is because Agni (the god of fire) had been subjugated and restrained by Rāvaṇa for so long that, feeling liberated at last, he consumed with gusto the island of Laṅkā. Finally, let us cite a few examples of how the author of the *Īṭu* refers to Tamiḷ grammar in his explanations. In the *Īṭu*, in reference to stanza 6:8:8 the verb *pērttumaṟṟē* is explained as a participle beginning a noun clause, not a finite verb. Thus it has to be connected with either the previous or the following stanza to have a complete meaning.[51] In regard to stanza 7:3:2, where Nammāḷvār uses the term *nāṉakkaruṅkuḻal*, meaning "sweet-smelling long black hair", Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai remarks that *nāṉa*, being an adjective qualifying the word *kuḻal* (long hair), has been described by a Tamiḷ grammarian as *nāvi pōṉṟakuḻal*, meaning "long hair like (the sweet smell of) musk". Or in stanza 5:4:7, where Nammāḷvār uses the term *kaṅkulvāy*, the commentator says that though *kaṅkul* means darkness, the term *kaṅkulvāy* means a "day comprising a night and a day" as already interpreted and expounded by a "great Tamiḷ grammarian". (Who the grammarian was we are not told.)

The heritage of Tamiḷ literature is remembered in the *Īṭu* and there is a richness of literary and scholarly references to Tamiḷ works. Proof texts, however, are not confined to Tamiḷ literature, for the commentator has alluded to Saṃskṛt sources like the *Bhagavadgītā* in a number of places in his *Īṭu* (*vide* 10:7:5; 1:3:5; 5:7:11; 7:9:2). It is interesting, however, that the commentator considers the *Bhagavadgītā* to belong to a different category (in fact of secondary importance) when compared to the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. The following story in reference to 10:7:5 indicates his preference. Should a stranger who is a scholar in the *Bhagavadgītā* arrive at a house, he may be fed, but would be asked to lie down for rest in the outside verandah of the house, whereas should a scholar of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* arrive, he would receive a warmer reception and be given all honours, including a bed within the

[51] tamiḻar viṉaiyeccamāk kiṭakkiṟatu eṉṟu colluvārkaḷ.

Īṭu, 6:8:8. [Bk. VI, p. 380.]

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house for his rest.[52] While such an incident shows the importance attached to the scripture *Tiruvāymoḷi* and the discussion of surrender (*prapatti*) that is central to this text, it also shows, at least to this Ācārya, that texts such as the *Bhagavadgītā* that emphasize devotion (*bhakti*), action (*karma*), and knowledge (*jñāna*), are secondary. A true Śrīvaiṣṇava is one who knows the *Tiruvāymoḷi*; such a stranger is to be trusted completely and honoured in one's home.

The quality of the 36,000 (the *Īṭu*) has made it one of the most popular commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai's other commentary on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruviruttam* is also called the *Īṭu*, and it too is basically a collection of the discourses of Nampiḷḷai. Even about this *Īṭu* it is said, "*Īṭu* has no *īṭu* (equal)".

PERIYAVĀCCĀṆPIḶḶAI

A contemporary of Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai and a key figure for our study of Maṇipravāḷa literature is Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai. He was born in 1228 A.D., the offspring of Yāmunadeśika and Nācciyārammā, at Ceṅkaṉūr in the Cōḷa kingdom of Tamiḻnāṭu. Originally named Kṛṣṇapādar, he was later given the appellation Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, meaning the "venerated great treacher", to distinguish him from other *āccāṉs*, *i.e.*, teachers. According to the tradition, he was from his childhood onward a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Śaivites of Ceṅkaṉūr began to persecute Kṛṣṇapādar. Eventually, unable to bear this persecution, he left his native place and went to Śrīraṅgam, where he spent the rest of his life. There he became a disciple of Nampiḷḷai. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai was the first Ācārya to write commentaries on all the hymns of the Āḻvārs (as listed below).

[52] 'srī gītaiyai abhyasittāṉoruvaṉ sandyā sadassilē ceṉṟāl palarumāka nāḻiyariciyaik koṭuttu viśvāsikkamāṭṭāmaiyālē "puṟantiṉṉaiyilē kiṭa" eṉpārkaḷ; Tiruvāymoḻi kaṟṟāṉ oru viṉṉappam ceyvāṉ ceṉṟāl sarveśvaraṉakappaṭa puṟappaṭṭu etirkoṇṭu akamoḻittukkoṭuttu, amutu paṭiyum eṭuttuviṭṭu satkarippārkaḷ' eṉṟārām.

Īṭu, 10:7:5. [*BV*, Bk. VII, p. 236.]

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Divya Prabandham	*Name of the Āḻvār*
First Thousand:	
1. *Tiruppallāṇṭu*	Periyāḻvār
2. *Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi*[53]	Periyāḻvār
3. *Tiruppāvai*	Āṇṭāḷ
4. *Nācciyārtirumoḻi*	Āṇṭāḷ
5. *Perumāḷtirumoḻi*	Kulaśēkhara
6. *Tiruccantaviruttam*	Tirumaḻicai
7. *Tirumālai*	Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi
8. *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci*	Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi
9. *Amalanātipirāṉ*	Tiruppāṇ
10. *Kaṇṇinuṇciṟuttāmpu*	Madhurakavi
Second Thousand:	
11. *Tirumoḻi (Periya)*	Tirumaṅkai
12. *Tirukkuṟuntāṇṭakam*	Tirumaṅkai
13. *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*	Tirumaṅkai
Third Thousand:[54]	
14. *Mutaltiruvantāti*	Poykai
15. *Iraṇṭāntiruvantāti*	Pūtam
16. *Mūṉṟāntiruvantāti*	Pēy
17. *Nāṉmukaṉtiruvantāti*	Tirumaḻicai
18. *Tiruviruttam*	Nammāḻvār
19. *Tiruvāciriyam*	Nammāḻvār
20. *Periyatiruvantāti*	Nammāḻvār
21. *Tiruveḻukkūṟṟirukkai*	Tirumaṅkai
22. *Ciṟiyatirumaṭal*	Tirumaṅkai
23. *Periyatirumaṭal*	Tirumaṅkai
Fourth Thousand:	
24. *Tiruvāymoḻi*	Nammāḻvār

This feat of commenting on the entire four thousand hymns gives Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai the honour of being not only the most extensive commentator, but also the one who has made intimate re-

[53] The work is not available in full.

[54] This Iyarpā is taken as 3rd 1000 by some Ācāryas.

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flections on all hymns, and hence, is in the best position to compare the writings of the different Āḻvārs.

In reference to language and style, we see that the rate of Tamiḻ words to Saṃskṛt words is about 2 to 1 (just as in the work of his contemporary Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai). Whereas he usually adopts the style of Tamiḻ mixed with Saṃskṛt words that is peculiar to the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas, at places he writes very lucid and simple Tamiḻ. In the course of giving word by word meanings, he discusses in great detail the subtletics of semantic distinctions, grammatical possibilities as influencing meaning, proof texts to give authority and additional clarification to the point, as well as numerous similes and illustrations. We shall here discuss in detail some of the choice passages of this author to document his genius as a commentator. We see, for example, that sometimes he gives exhaustive meanings and explanations for a single word or line. For instance, for the phrase: *mantipāyvaṭavēṅkaṭamāmalai*, meaning literally "Vēṅkaṭa mountain of the North on which monkeys frolic", he gives the explanation, which we paraphrase as follows:

> In the Tirumalai mountain the jack trees are completely laden with fruits. Monkeys that come to eat these fruits start eating one fruit, then when their eyes happen to rest on another fruit, being of a fickle mind, they leap from one fruit to another. This is like the devotee's feasting his eyes on different parts of the Lord's body. The Vēṅkaṭa mountain abounds in forests and monkeys. The monkeys hang on to one another like a chain. When they hear the blowing of the horn (from the temple) they bounce and leap about. The Lord's presence, the Tirumalai hill and temple are inseparable like Ayodhyā (Rāma's birthplace) and its adjoining groves. One can rest in either of the places. As the jack-fruits are beautiful and adorn the whole tree from the foot to the top, the monkeys are not satisfied just with one fruit, and so they go about from fruit to fruit. *Vaṭavēṅkaṭam* (Tirupati) lies in the northern end of Tamiḻnāṭu. Both Heaven and Earth come together here.[55]

[55] Amalaṉātipirāṉ, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Sta. 3, =p. 43f.

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In this exhaustive discussion of the simple line, "Vēṅkaṭa mountain of the north whereon monkeys frolic", the commentator uses this line to develop the point that, just as monkeys jump from fruit to fruit because each one they see looks better than the previous one they tasted, so also the devotee is attracted to the various abodes of the Lord. Besides such an insight instigated only by the idea of monkeys frolicking, the commentator gives the location of Vēṅkaṭam and the association of this holy place with Heaven.

To sort out semantic distinctions and to bring out subtle nuances of the words in the works on which he wrote commentaries, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai gives explanations like the following to the line, *nālvetamkaṇṭāṉē* in stanza 8:10:1 of *Periyatirumoḻi* of Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār. Here he states that the verb *kaṇṭāṉē* can be interpreted in two ways—(1) in the active voice, and (2) in the passive voice. If taken in the active voice, the phrase *nālvētaṃkaṇṭāṉē*, when applied to Lord Viṣṇu, will mean "one Who created the four Vedas", *i.e.*, Ṛk, Yajus, Sāma, and Atharva. If taken in the passive voice, the term will mean "one who has been created or found by the four Vedas".[56]

In his explanation for the line 10:2:1 of *Periyatirumoḻi*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes a discussion between Nañjīyar and Nampiḷḷai on a certain semantic problem. For the phrase *arakkarāṭaḷaippārillai*, Nañjīyar gave the meaning "there is no one to call out anyone, like sheep (*āṭu*) among the demons (*rākṣasas*)". He attributed this meaning to his preceptor Parāśarabhaṭṭar. Then Nampiḷḷai said: "I am of the opinion that the word *āṭu* here means 'victory', which is one of the other meanings of that word. If taken thus, the whole term will mean 'there is no one among the *rākṣasas* to bear the tidings of victory (since the whole race has been wiped out by Rāma)". Nañjīyar applauded and accepted this new interpretation given by his disciple Nampiḷḷai.[57] (This incident also throws light on the master-disciple relationship

[56] Bhaṭṭar aruḷicceytārāka ciṟiyāttān paṇikkumpaṭi, itu kartari yaṉṟu; karmaṇi kiṭāy . . .

Periyatirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, 8:10:1, p. 565.

[57] Periyatirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, 10:2:10, p. 636.

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of those days. When a preceptor found that his disciple's interpretation of a certain obscure passage was more fitting than what he himself had given, he was quick to applaud and accept it, without letting false pride about his own erudition stand in the way. (We shall return to this point later.)

In recording another discussion between Nañjīyar and Nampiḷḷai on a semantic point, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai writes that with reference to the phrase *varaiyeṉapeyerṟaru* occurring in stanza 1:2:10 of *Periyatirumoḻi*, Nañjīyar said that the lines in which the term occurs mean "big pythons, mistaking clusters of clouds for elephants, went out of fear to hide in the holes in the mountains". His disciple Nampiḷḷai countered this explanation with the interpretation that "the pythons, far from being afraid of elephants, went to eat up the clusters of clouds which they took to be elephants". Nañjīyar accepted this explanation.[58]

In another place Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai records that for the line *karavāmaṭanākutaṉkaṉṟuvuḷḷiṉārpōl*, a commentator thought that its apparent meaning, "just as a cow thinks of its calf", in referring to Lord Viṣṇu was not suitable to the context. Then someone reminded him that Parāśarabhaṭṭar used to interpret it as "just as a calf thinks of its cow". This meaning is possible because in Tamiḻ in certain constructions the case ending, especially of the accusative case, is not overtly expressed and is taken "as if" expressed.[59]

In the course of his commentary on *Tiruppallāṇṭu* by Periyāḻvār, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai elucidates a crucial point that has puzzled a number of people, *i.e.*, why the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra* has captivated devotees more than the *Rāmāvatāra*. In the course of his explanation of *Tiruppallāṇṭu*, 9, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that Nañjīyar asked his mentor Parāśarabhaṭṭar why all the Āḻvārs had been particularly attracted to the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra* rather than the *Rāmāvatāra*. Bhaṭṭar replied that Rāma was not only the embodiment of all ideal qualities, but He was also beloved of His parents and subjects alike. His kingdom, Ayodhyā, was an abode of peace and quiet. He was surrounded by ministers

[58] Periyatirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, 1:2:10, p. 36.

[59] Periyatirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, 7:1:1, p. 445.

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and courtiers who were above blame. There was no need for fear among the people; there was peace on earth and goodwill among people. But the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra* was an entirely different story. Kṛṣṇa was born in the abode of Kaṃsa, His sworn enemy; He was brought up among the cowherds and was always defending Himself and His people against the onslaught of the assassins and demons sent by Kaṃsa to kill Him. The times (the Dvāpara Yuga) were bad and were approaching a still worse period (the Kali Yuga); consequently, the Āḻvārs themselves were influenced by this nameless and gnawing fear and sought refuge with Kṛṣṇa by singing His praises.[60]

In the very first stanza of his commentary on Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai* Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai elucidates the line *kūrvēlkoṭuntoḻiḻaṉnantakōpaṉ*, which means literally "Nandagōpa who was armed with sharp spears and who was (murderously) aggressive". Nandagōpa, the foster father of Kṛṣṇa, was of the cowherd community, a usually docile people. How could he be aggressive and armed with spears? According to the commentator, Nandagōpa was docile before the advent of Kṛṣṇa. But after he came to know that Kaṃsa was after the child, he was spurred to take up arms to protect the child.

In his explanation of the line *uṉṉaikkāṇumārkam oṉṟaṟiyamāṭṭā maṉṉicaṟil turicarāya mūṛkaṉēṉ vantuniṉṟēṉ mūṛkaṉēṉ mūṛkaṉēṉē*, occurring in stanza 32 of Toṇṭaraṭippoḍiyāḻvār's *Tirumālai*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says:

> "Lord, I, the most foolish and undeserving of human beings, have come taking refuge with you. How could such a foolish and undeserving person as I come and seek refuge with You? The realization that I am foolish makes me seek refuge with you. Just as poison pollutes a spring of good drinking water, so I, lowly and foolish as I am, by seeking refuge with You pollute your august presence.[61]

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[60] Tiruppaḷḷāṇṭu, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Sta. 9, p. 95.

[61] taṉṉir kuṭikkiṟa ūṟoḷiḻē nāṅcai iṭuvāraip pōḻē vilakṣaṇabhōgyamāṉa viṣayattaik kiṭṭi aḻittēṉ eṉkiṟār.

Tirumālai, Com: Periavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Sta. 32, p. 122.

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Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes from Caṅkam and post-Caṅkam literature, such as the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and *Nālaṭiyār*, in his commentaries. This shows his vast knowledge of Tamiḻ literature. For example, there is a certain form of expression called *iṭakkaraṭakkal* in Tamiḻ grammar. This would be called "euphemism" in English, for it is substituting a word or expression that would be used by cultured people for a blunt or crude term. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai refers to this and also quotes such an expression in illustrating a point. This occurs in his explanation of stanza 6:2 of *Perumāḷtirumoḻi* by Kulaśēkharāḻvār with reference to the lines: "O Dāmodara! Your flower-decked hair is all tussled, perspiration is wetting Your face, Your scarlet lips are trembling. Well do I know how much You helped her in churning curd!" The commentator Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that Kulaśēkharāḻvār actually meant that Kṛṣṇa had sexual intercourse with the girl. He described Kṛṣṇa's dishevelled hair, perspiration-wetted face and trembling lips (all of which are the aftermath of sexual union) only as a sort of euphemism, since he did not want to say explicitly that Kṛṣṇa had had sexual union with the girl. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai notes that such an indirect reference is comparable to the Tamiḻ usage of *cuṉaiyāṭal*, which literally means, "to bathe in the spring", but actually serves as euphemism for "having sexual union".[62] In the same way, Kulaśēkharāḻvār also describes Kṛṣṇa's bodily reaction instead of saying that he had sexual union with the girl.

The commentaries by this Ācārya make such an interesting reading that one is reluctant to stop quoting examples. His expansion of meaning in a phrase to incorporate one of his own thoughts (as in the reference to the "Vēṅkaṭa mountain of the north wherein monkeys frolic"), his careful study of semantic distinctions, his treatment of questions of general historical and religious interest, his elucidation by means of references to the Epics, his careful documentation of *guruparamparā* teaching in reference to the commentaries, and his extensive use of Caṅkam and post-Caṅkam proof texts—all contribute to his stature as the exemplar of mature Maṇipravāḷa commentary on the hymns of the Āḻvārs, along with his contemporary and colleague Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai.

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[62] ivai yellām punarccikkuṟiyiṟē, tamiḻar cuṉaiyāṭal eṉṟu oru kalaviyaic collumāpōlē.

Perumāḷtirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Sta. 5:2, p. 87.

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In some respects, however, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai makes more outstanding contributions to the literature than his colleague. He is the only one to comment on *all* the hymns of the Āḻvārs and is therefore able to compare the development of a certain idea by different Āḻvārs. For instance, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his introduction to Kulaśēkharāḻvār's *Perumāḷtirumoḻi* compares that decade with Nammāḻvār's 6:2:1-10 and Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār's 10:8:1-10. In all the three decades he notes that though the theme *ūṭal* (sulks) is common to all the three Āḻvārs, one may find the following differences. Nammāḻvār, fully imagining himself as the *nāyakī* (female lover) uses very strong words in this decade to express his anger. Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār expresses the same feeling with mild words. Again Kulaśēkhara in this decade expresses the same feeling but with pride, for he explicitly reveals his birth in the royal family and considers himself to have sufficient status to question the deeds of the Lord.[63]

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai gives consistency to both his method and thought by writing his commentaries in a much more systematic way than his predecessors. His two other most important innovations are his use of Maṇipravāḷa in writing commentaries on Saṃskṛt works of previous Ācāryas and his writing of *rahasyagranthas*. In the next chapter we shall consider these two kinds of works, which are important for understanding the development of Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophy during this period. Let us simply note here that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai certainly earned the title *vyākhyānacakravartin* (" king of the commentators ").

There are commentaries on the *Divyaprabandham* after Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai. As we have previously discussed, Vedānta Deśika summarizes the *Tiruvāymoḻi* in his *Dramiḍopaniṣattātparyaratnāvali*. He also comments on Tiruppāṇāḻvār's *Amalaṉātipirāṉ* in his work *Munivāhaṉabhogam* (the title of which refers to the story of how this Āḻvār of low *varṇa* came into the temple riding on the shoulders of Lokasāraṅgamuni). Besides these two extant

[63] Nammālvār bhagavadviṣayattil niṟṟa ūṟṟamellām tōṟṟa vaṉmaiyutaittāyirukkum 'miṉṉuṭaimaṭavār.' Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvārtam mārdavamellāmtōṟṟa menmaiyai yuṭaittāyirukkum kātil-kaṭipu.' ivar tammuṭaiya rājakulamellām tōṟṟavirukkum ittirumoḻi.

Perumāḷtirumoḻi, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, 6: Pravesam, p. 83.

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works, there are references in the tradition to a commentary written by him on Madhurakaviyāḷvāi, but if it did exist, it is now lost. Vedāntadeśika is the prodigious author of a vast corpus of literature, mainly in Saṃskṛt, but also of 34 works in Maṇipravāḷa. Whatever language he uses, he creates a style full of life and rhythm and pure classical beauty. We shall study this author in detail in the next chapter on *rahasyagranthas*, since this is where his significant contribution lies.

AḶAKIYAMAṆAVĀḶAPPERUMĀḶNĀYAṈĀR

Far more important among the post-Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai commentators is Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār. He was the second son of Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai (and the younger brother of Piḷḷailokācārya). He was also Vedāntadeśika's younger contemporary. Born at the end of the thirteenth century, he was a precocious child, and learned all the *Śāstras* and *rahasyas* under his illustrious father and brother. He did not marry, but early became a sannyāsī and remained so all his life. This Ācārya has to his credit the following commentaries:

(*a*) A commentary on *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ

(*b*) A commentary on *Amalaṉātipirāṉ* of Tiruppāṇāḷvār

(*c*) A commentary on *Kaṇṇinuṇciṟuttāmpu* of Madhurakaviyāḷvār.

Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār's commentary on Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai* is called *Aṟāyirappaṭi* (the 6,000) because this commentary is in 6,000 *granthas*. This work is the most exhaustive explanation of the *Tiruppāvai* written so far. Its style is simple and full of interesting incidents; in this respect it resembles Vaṭakkuttiruvītppiḷḷai's *Īṭu*.

Because this author was so interested in Nammāḷvār, he also chose to write a commentary on *Kaṇṇinuṇciṟutāmpu*, which was written by Nammāḷvār's disciple Madhurakavi. The importance of Nammāḷvār for the Śrīvaiṣṇva tradition is here expressed: commenting on stanza 2, Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār states that he is consigning himself to the feet of

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Nammāḻvār. (The Ācārya points out that he is not consigning himself to the feet of God). This shows that the Āḻvār placed Nammāḻvār on a par with God.[64]

Just as Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai and Vedāntadeśika write commentaries for Tiruppāṇāḻvār's work, so does Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār bring his own genius for commenting on the *Amalaṉātipirāṉ*. For instance, in interpreting stanza 10, which begins with the words *koṇṭalvaṇṇaṉai*, Vedāntadeśika interprets this phrase, which has the meaning "one whose colour is like that of the cloud", as "it was as if a black cloud formed out of the waters of the ocean had come and settled in the middle of the Kāveri River". On the other hand, Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār suggests two meanings for *vaṇṇaṉ*: either "one who has the colour of" or "one who has the nature of", thus giving two interpretations to the phrase:

(*a*) (Lord Viṣṇu) Who has the colour of the cloud

(*b*) (Lord Viṣṇu) Who has the quality or nature of the cloud (meaning that, just as the cloud gives welcome water to one and all without partiality or bias, the Lord also bestows His kindness on all, including those who turn away from Him).[65]

TIRUVĀYMOḺIPPIḺḺAI

To conclude our discussion of individual commentators, we might mention Tiruvāymoḻippiḷḷai, who wrote one work, a commentary on *Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi*. Although Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai is reported to have written a commentary on *Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi*, the work was not available, and hence Tiruvāymoḻippiḷḷai wrote a fresh commentary on *Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi*. Later Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ, his disciple, also wrote a commentary on that work.

[64] Kaṉṉinuṇciṟuttāmpu, Com: Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār, Sta. 2 pp. 97 ff.

[65] vaṇṇam ' eṉṟu svabhāvamātal; niṟamātal;
Amalaṉātipiraṉ, Com: Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār, Sta. 10, p. 111.

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Tiruvāymoḷippiḷḷai (ca. 1300-1405), who was born in Kuṇṭikai, was also known as Tirumalaiyāḷvār and Śrīśaileśa. As was common practice, Tiruvāymoḷippiḷḷai gives free rein to imagination in his commentary. Discussing stanza 1:7:6 of Periyāḷvār tirumoḷi, he says: Periyāḷvār has described how the child Kṛṣṇa came walking with the conch on one leg and the disc (*cakra*) on the other. Periyāḷvār has used the term *orukāl* to indicate one leg. But *oru*, apart from meaning " one ", also means " unparalleled" in Tamiḷ. Because the child Kṛṣṇa's leg was so beautiful and unparalleled, Periyāḷvār has used the term *orukāl*. Later, after describing the beauty of the two legs individually, Periyāḷvār used the term *irukāl* (both legs). Tiruvāymoḷippiḷḷai says that Periyāḷvār, who could not see any parallel to the legs when seeing them individually, found that these legs could serve as parallels to each other, and hence he used the term *irukāl* (two legs). Sometimes the commentator profusely elaborates a line in the original text as above, but at other times he may question why the author used a particular phrase that seems redundant. For example, in commenting on the stanza 2:9:1, which describes how the women of the cowherd community of Āyarpāṭi came to Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa's foster-mother, to complain about the pranks of the child Kṛṣṇa, saying that they were unbearable, Tiruvāymoḷippiḷḷai takes up the words mentioned above. The line describes how Kṛṣṇa, after stealing into their houses and eating all the butter stored in pots, smashed the empty pots by dashing them on the rocks. He says one could understand the cowherd women saying that Kṛṣṇa ate their butter, but why should he break the empty pots also? Does it not sound unnecessary? He answers the question by saying that that was also one of Kṛṣṇa's tactics. If he had merely stolen and eaten the butter, it was possible he might be caught red-handed. But if he dashed the empty pots on the rocks, everybody would hear the sound, and the concerned women would come running to save their pots. In the general confusion he could escape unnoticed.

This ends our study of individual commentators, but there remains one interesting question for consideration: the relationship between scripture and commentary.

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The relationship between scripture and commentary is a general problem in the history of religions. The authority of interpretation must be defined. The question of standardization of interpretation arises. The problems of orthodoxy and dogma may lead to schisms, with the result that each faction tries to prove the legitimacy of its position by resorting to scriptural passages, logic, etc., as support for its apologetics.

In the case of the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition we find the authority to interpret coming from the *guruparampará*. According to tradition, Rāmānuja gave 74 families the authority to be Ācāryas for the community.[66] The "intellectual *guruparampará*" for the community (at least in the early period), however, was not defined by the *birth* of the person into a certain family (in other words, it was not by hereditary right), but rather by *choice*. Let us explain. Any Śrīvaiṣṇava might become the disciple of a master, and if he showed intellectual promise, the Ācārya might appoint him a certain work to undertake. The emphasis was on training, knowledge of scripture, and ability to write. While a great Ācārya might have many disciples he would realize who was suited for a particular kind of work and encourage him accordingly. Thus we saw how Rāmānuja personally requested Piḷḷāṉ to write a commentary; Bhaṭṭa chose Nañjīyar to write another commentary; perhaps Nampiḷḷai asked Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai to record his discourses. Therefore, there was strong guidance from the great Ācāryas about *what* should be written and *who* should do it. Of course a disciple himself could take up a work on his own initiative. The main criteria, we might say, were to be a Śrīvaiṣṇava, have discipular relationship to a great Ācārya, and be intellectually sophisticated in the scriptures of *ubhayavedānta* as well as in secondary literatures such as Caṅkam texts, Tamiḻ grammar, etc.

In reference to the question of standardization of commentaries, we might say that generally in this period there was a very relaxed approach to commenting. The emphasis was on teaching the community, and on the purely intellectual pleasure of understanding the rich heritage of *ubhayavedānta*. After Yāmuna

[66] *GPP*, p. 270.

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and Rāmānuja established Viśiṣṭādvaita as a school of Vedānta to be acknowledged by other schools, the later Ācāryas wrote mainly for the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, not for the reputation of Viśiṣṭādvaita vis-à-vis the contending views (*darśanas*). This had a profound effect on the nature of the commentaries. Although good intellectual debate was encouraged, the spectacle of one school pitted against another, "wounding one another with mouth-weapons" to establish the supremacy of their positions, was rarely witnessed. We rather find that if someone's interpretation of a passage was better than that of his predecessor, it was applauded. As already observed, the teacher himself often acknowledged the superior contribution of his disciple. Debate was "all in the family", so to speak, and so refinement of interpretation was important, not defense of the very presuppositions of the philosophy.

The basis of the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentatorial tradition rests on the *oral discourses* given by the Ācāryas to groups of devotees. For instance, in the *Īṭu* there are two different interpretations of a certain phrase given by Kūreśa himself, suggesting that he had given the same discourse several times and occasionally changed his mind about the interpretation. To be explicit, while commenting on the phrase *pālēytamiḻaricaikārarpattar* (literally, "those who speak Tamiḻ, which is just like milk, those who sing tunes, those who are devotees") found in *Tiruvāymoḻi* 1:5:11, Kūreśa first says that the Tamiḻ, which is sweet like milk, refers to Madhurakavi: He defines *icaikārar* as "musicians", which indicates Nāthamuni, while the word *pattar* indicates those devotees who are losing themselves to the Lord. Another time, commenting on the same phrase, he remarks that *pālēytamiḻ* refers to Parāṅkuśanampi, *icaikārar* refers to Tiruvaraṅkaperumāḷaraiyar, and *pattar* indicates Piḷḷaiyuṟaṅkāviḷḷitācar. This is a direct reflection of the process of oral commentary, in which different examples for illustration may come to mind on different occasions. The *Īṭu*, besides recording Kūreśa's two different renditions of the phrase, also gives Yāmuna's even earlier interpretation: *pālēytamiḻ* refers to the first three Āḻvārs (*mutalāḻvārkaḷai*), *icaikārar* to Tiruppāṇāḻvār, and the word *pattar* indicates Periyāḻvār.[67] The

[67] Īṭu, 1:5:11. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 258.]

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author of the *Īṭu*, by recording these three earlier interpretations, demonstuates that the Ācāryas wanted to find in this hymn references to the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas. Kūreśa was no doubt following Yāmuna's general method of interpretation, but simply substituted different examples. Although three examples of interpretation are recorded here, the commentator does not judge among the variations. Another such discussion is recorded in the *Īṭu*. Nañjīyar, while going to the temple at Śrīraṅgam, met Piḷḷāṉ and asked him whether the Lord has the all-pervasiveness by his *svarūpa* alone or His *vigraha* (from) also. Piḷḷāṉ replied that Bhāṣyakāra (*i.e.*, Rāmānuja) used to say there is only the *svarūpavyāpti*, the all-pervasiveness by His essential form (*svarūpa*). But Empār once said that the Lord who is all-pervasive also enters the space of the heart with His divine form (*vigraha*).[68] Such discussions among commentators such as Nañjīyar and Piḷḷāṉ must have been common. As they reflected on the meaning, they would cite prior interpretations by the Ācāryas.

Sometimes we see the process by definition. Empār (Govinda), addressing an assembly, gave the meaning of stanza 2:3:2 of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. While explaining the line *aṟiyātaṉa aṟivitta cttā*, he said that it means " one who has given the knowledge in unknown subjects ". The question arose for discussion, " Who is the first guru (*prathamaguru*) for the soul?" Some of the disciples said the Ācārya is the *prathamaguru*, and some others said the Vaiṣṇava who has taken him to Ācārya is *prathamaguru*. Empār, however, argued that such interpretations are not correct, for although a Vaiṣṇava called him and directed him to the Ācārya, the individual accepted his intercession because the Lord was within his heart and made him accept help. Therefore, the Lord is the *prathamaguru*.[69] Besides showing how interpretation and debate are directly related to the process of definition, the incident, which is recorded in the *Īṭu*, illustrates the importance of *oral commentary*. Apparently Empār did not write a commentary himself, but significant points in his discourses were remembered and recorded.

[68] Īṭu, 7:3:1. [*BV*, Bk. VII, p. 109.]

[69] Īṭu, 2:3:2. [*BV*, Bk. II, p. 85.]

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Occasionally an interpretation is recorded because its superior philosophic value is acknowledged. The *Iṭu* records that in reference to 1:7:7 of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* the phrase, "standing very close to the flesh and mixing with my soul", was considered by some people to mean that the Lord was mixing only with the soul which is in the body. Nañjīyar, however, says that the Lord is standing very close to the body and mixing with the soul, just as the beloved in embrace is prepared to accept the impure sweat of the body of the lover. With this interpretation Nañjīyar argues philosophically that the Lord accepts even the bodily defects (*doṣas*).[70] Sometimes, though, the commentator strains the passage to make a philosophical point. In a conversation between Ammāḷ and Parāśarabhaṭṭar recorded by Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, there is a difference of opinion in regard to stanza 8:7:9 of the *Tiruvāymoḷi*. Ammāḷ interprets one of the lines as "I have taken God to my heart on account of my discerning faculty," Parāśarabhaṭṭar argues that the meaning is "I permitted God to enter my heart". The variation depends on how the term *mati* is defined. Ammāḷ gives the customary definition—"brain, intelligence, thought, discerning faculty"—whereas Bhaṭṭar defines *mati* as "permission", a connotation that is never found in Tamiḷ, although occasionally *mati* may stand for *anumati* in Saṃskṛt.[71] Bhaṭṭar's semantic argument is weak here, although it does allow him to develop a more authentically Śrīvaiṣṇava theological interpretation (*i.e.*, rather than one's accepting God due to *one's own* discernment, God because of His grace wishes to enter and so the individual permits Him to do so).

Of all the commentators Rāmānuja is the one who strongly defends his interpretations against variant views. Differences of opinion with his predecessor Yāmuna are recorded in the *Iṭu*. Yāmuna himself had selected Rāmānuja as the person to succeed

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[70] abhimata viṣayattil aḻukku ukappāraippōlē eṉṉuṭaiya śarīrattaip paṟṟi eṉ pakkalilē vilakkāmai peṟṟavāṟē eṉ ātmāvoṭu vantu kalantāṉ eṉṟu cīyar aruḷicceyyumpaṭi.

Iṭu, 1:7:7. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 306.]

[71] 'ivaṉ paṭiyai aṟintukoṇṭēṉ eṉkiṟār' eṉṉum ammāḷ. aṉṟikkē 'matiḥ-anumatiḥ' eṉṟākki 'anumatimātrattālē, eṉṟar Bhaṭṭar.

Iṭu, 8:7:9. [*BV*, Bk. VIII, p. 226.]

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him, although he had only once had a glimpse of him. Yāmuna before his death had directed five of his disciples to instruct Rāmānuja on the various Vaiṣṇava works. The instructions given by those disciples were punctuated by lively discussions on the interpretations of the various lines, the interpretation of Rāmānuja often differing from the interpretation given by Yāmuna as expounded by his disciples. For instance, while discussing stanza 2:3:1 of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār, Rāmānuja said that one of the lines means, " My union with the Lord is like the combination of honey, milk, ghee, sugarcane and nectar ". Yāmuna's disciple Tirumālaiyāṇṭāṉ said that Yāmuna interpreted it as, "The union with the Lord is like the combination of honey and honey, of milk and milk ". But Rāmānuja differed from this interpretation, saying that it means that this union with the Lord itself produces all these delicious tastes. He cited the Upaniṣadic principle *sarvagandhaḥ sarvarasaḥ* (all fragrance, all taste) to establish the combination of all the *rasas* in God.[72] In the discussion of stanza 2:3:3 of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, we encounter a similar difference of opinion. The two lines of this stanza were explained by Tirumālaiyāṇṭāṉ (from Yāmuna) as, " Lord, You blessed me with Your grace at the time when I was too young and unaware of the ways of the world. Now you have placed me in this world of ignorance. Is this fair on Your part?" Rāmānuja differed sharply with this interpretation, saying that this interpretation sounded as if the Āḻvār were blaming the Lord, when the fact remained that the Lord knew best.[73] Instead, he maintained that Yāmuna must have interpreted the line as " Lord, of all this ignorant world, You have chosen me (lowly and ignorant me) to be blessed by Your grace ".

In the first example, Rāmānuja differs from Yāmuna, because he wants to present the parallel idea found in the Upaniṣads. Rāmānuja's constant desire to give Upaniṣadic authority to the South Indian Vaiṣṇava tradition is the reason why he differs from Yāmuna. Our statement finds further support in *Īṭu* 3:3:6, where again an example of how Rāmānuja differs from Yāmuna is recorded. Before offering his remarks, Rāmānuja is quoted

[72] Īṭu, 2:3:1. [*BV*, Bk. II, p. 82.]

[73] Īṭu, 2:3:3. [*BV*, Bk. II, p. 81.]

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as saying: "Can we not offer comment on this particular line according to Vedānta?" In the second example we provided, we find that Rāmānuja stresses that the qualities of God are described in the original, unlike Yāmuna, who stresses the poetic beauty of the stanza. Thus we find that Rāmānuja critically examines the former interpretations of the great Ācārya Yāmuna, but he does not want to appear disloyal. Because of his respect for the Ācārya, his sense of *guruparampará* succession, and his desire to maintain "peace in the family", he is careful not to say bluntly that Yāmuna is wrong; rather he remarks that the *report* of what Yāmuna said is erroneous. Because he considers the tradition of debate central to the intellectual tradition itself, Rāmānuja wishes to preserve it. While there should be some semblance of authority in the *guruparamparā* tradition to preserve respect for the Ācāryas as the interpreters of *ubhayavedānta*, there should also be freedom of thought and interpretation within the general Viśiṣṭādvaitic framework. Perhaps it is this very openness to new meaning and to creativity of thought that made Rāmānuja reject the task of writing a commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, fearing that it would put a seal of final authority on the commentatorial tradition. Also, it is interesting that the commentaries are later called *anubhavagranthas*, a term that is interpreted by the Śrīvaiṣṇavas to mean "works of enjoyment". Anything may be said in these commentaries—the authors with appropriate knowledge of scripture, philosophy, grammar, and logic have the authority and the freedom to say what they think fit. Their labour of enjoyment is appreciated with enjoyment, hence the term *anubhavagrantha*. To explain this last point more fully we might add that beginning with Piḷḷāṉ the commentators on the *Tiruvāymoḻi* use the common term *anubhava* as a verb and as a verbal noun to mean that the Āḻvār is "enjoying" the Lord. *Anubhava*, which usually means "experience", is used by the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentators to mean that experience which is the relish of all kinds of emotional relations with the Lord. The fullness of the experience of different emotional relations is enjoyment. Hence *anubhava* in this literature may be commonly understood as "enjoyment".

Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai in his *Īṭu, Śriyaḥppatippaṭi* I, says that Nammāḻvār was enjoying the Lord by the Lord's grace, and so was considered to be quitefull (of everything) (*paripūrṇa*). These works

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of Nammāḻvār were the outcome of this experience of the qualities of *svarūpa, rūpa, guṇa, vibhūti*, for the Āḻvār deeply experienced these qualities and when he was unable to control his emotional experiences, they came out in the form of his hymns. Here we find that *anubhava* is the deep experience of the Lord's qualities, *i.e.*, the enjoyment of them. We might recall that the very term *āḻvār* refers to those who dive deeply (into the experience of the Lord).

Unlike the Ācāryas' discussion of the *tattvas* and the *rahasyas* that can be characterized as sharing a consistency of approach, the Ācāryas' commentaries on the hymns of the Āḻvārs are characterized by the individuality of interpretation. Each commentator on the hymns of the Āḻvārs wished to understand the glory of the Lord as well as to share in the experience of the Āḻvārs. Consequently their imaginative participation in the Āḻvārs' hymns gave rise to individuality of style.

Śrīvaiṣṇavism can be called a tradition of spiritual enjoyment. The basis of the tradition is the Āḻvārs' enjoyment (*anubhava*) of the Lord. Secondly, there is the commentators' enjoyment (*anubhava*) of the hymns of the Āḻvars. Because the commentators did not consider their task of commenting a pedantic work, but rather the very embodiment of their own enjoyment, their commentaries in turn became a literature to be enjoyed by the subsequent generations. In the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition direct enjoyment of the Lord can also be indirect enjoyment of Him through the hymns of the Āḻvārs and also the commentaries, which are testimonies of the spiritual experience of the community.

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CHAPTER III 95-166

MAṆIPRAVĀḶA RAHASYAGRANTHAS AND INDEPENDENT WORKS

The *rahasyagranthas* are "the works (containing) the secrets", a Maṇipravāḷa contribution to the refinement of key Śrīvaiṣṇava concepts and their explication for members of the community. As such the content of the *rahasyagranthas* is most important for understanding the development of Viśiṣṭādvaita in the post-Rāmānuja period. Our main concern in this chapter will be to trace significant discussions by the three Ācāryas of *rahasyagranthas*—Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika—to explicate the meaning of the three realities (*tattvas*), the three secret mantras (*rahasyas*), the intercession of Lakṣmī (*puruṣakāra*), surrender (*prapatti*), service (*kaiṅkarya*), and the summary of teachings (*arthapañcaka*). In the course of documenting the discussion of these themes we shall also take the opportunity to acquaint the reader with the different works comprising the literature of the *rahasyagranthas*, since one of our purposes in this introduction to Maṇipravāḷa Vaiṣṇava literature is to encourage further research in this domain. Finally, in this chapter we hope to probe once again the *guruparamparā* succession, to raise the issue of the development of doctrine, and to return to the problem of the *Teṉkalai/Vaṭakalai* split. The thought of Rāmānuja is the basis. Since he is the greatest early systematic exponent of Viśiṣṭādvaita, we must return to his writings as the foundation for the themes we wish to discuss. But this immediately raises some questions. Are the interests so central to the later Ācāryas also significant for Rāmānuja, or is there, as it initially appears, a radical departure from the foundation he provides? And if there is a major break in the continuity of thought between Rāmānuja and the later Ācāryas, as well as among the authors of the *rahasyagranthas* themselves, does this suggest that the tradition has respect for the succession of teachers as teachers rather than for the content of their teaching? Let us consider these intriguing propositions. We shall find that respect for both the teacher and the teaching are important.

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In the *rahasyagranthas* it is accepted that Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy is based on four concepts:

(1) The relation of the soul and body (*śarīraśarīribhāva*)

(2) Service to the Lord (*kaiṅkarya*), which is extended to service to His devotees.

(3) Self-surrender (*prapatti*) as the means to realise the Lord.

(4) The intercession of the Ācārya and Lakṣmī to realise the Lord.

According to the authors of the *rahasyagranthas*, these four aspects are interwoven. One must have the correct understanding of the Lord, the soul, and the body to desire salvation (*mokṣa*). *Mokṣa* is defined as service to God or to His devotees. *Mokṣa* can be achieved by surrendering to the Lord, and for such surrender the help of the Ācārya and Lakṣmī is necessary.

The relation of soul and body (*śarīraśarīribhāva*) is central to Rāmānuja's theology. He is able to integrate apparently diverse Upaniṣadic passages regarding the Lord, the soul, and the world through the interpretation that these three realities (*tattvas*), though distinct, have inseparable relation (*apṛthaksiddhi*); thus there is a unity with diversity. The authors of the *rahasyagranthas* accept Rāmānuja's definition of the three *tattvas* and their inseparable relation, although, as we shall see, occasionally they expand Rāmānuja's discussion. It has been acknowledged by some scholars that there is a dearth of information about *kaiṅkarya*, *prapatti*, and *puruṣakāra* in the writings of Rāmānuja. Only the three *Gadyas* contain any reference to these themes, and the context of the references is devotional, not scholastic. Other scholars assert that it is not a question of little information, but rather of no information, for they reject Rāmānuja's authorship of the *Gadyas* precisely because these devotional works with statements about taking refuge, performing service, and seeking intercession seem out of keeping with Rāmānuja's other writings. The *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, as its name suggests, deals with surrender (*śaraṇāgati* or *prapatti*) and contains evocative pleas such as: " O Refuge for those who have no refuge, I, who have no other refuge, take

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refuge under Your feet." "Having no other refuge" and "the inability to seek refuge by oneself",[1] later considered the two limbs of *prapatti*, are mentioned in the *Śaraṇāgatigadya*. Similarly, there is support for *kaiṅkarya* in the *Gadyas*: "When shall I become Your servant, serving You all the time?"[2] "I pray You to make me your servant forever"; "What should I do?"[3] Or one may argue (as do the later Ācāryas) that the beginning of the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* (where the author mentions that he is taking refuge under Śrī before taking refuge under the Lord) is a reference to the *puruṣakāra*.

We concede that these references that Rāmānuja makes are indeed meagre, and that the emphasis on these themes is certainly a contribution of the later literature of the *rahasyagranthas*. *But* we do not wish to go so far as to negate the possibility that Rāmānuja makes such references and in fact wrote the *Gadyas*. We must at this point, therefore, offer our arguments for his authorship of the *Gadyas*. Our earlier discussions of *ubhayavedānta* and the *guruparamparā* succession are relevant to our position.

(1) We have already established that Rāmānuja, although he himself never quotes the hymns of the Āḻvārs *verbatim*, did know the hymns, gave discourses on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, etc., and instructed his disciple Piḷḷāṉ to write a commentary on Nammāḻvār's hymns.[4] We may recall that a special feature of Piḷḷāṉ's style was his use of compounds and phrases found in Rāmānuja's *Gadyas* and his *Gītābhāṣya*.

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[1] aśaraṇyśaraṇya ananyaśaranaḥ tvatpādāravindayugalaṃ śaraṇam aham prapadye.

Śaraṇāgatigadya, 5. [*SM*, p. 9.]

[2] aśeṣāvasthocita aśeṣaśeṣataikaratirūpanityakinkaro bhavāni.

Śrīraṅgagadyam, 1. [SM, p. 11.]

[3] bhagavantaṃ nityakiṅkaratām prārthaye.

Śrīrṅgagadyam, 3. [*SM*, p. 11.]

[4] Guruparamparāprabhāvam 3000. pp. 110-111 & GPP, pp. 340-41.

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(2) In the Maṇipravāḷa commentaries, *rahasyagranthas*, and independent works, we find a record of an oral discourse attributed to Rāmānuja on *prapatti*, *kaiṅkarya*, and *puruṣakāra*. On the basis of the *guruparamparā* succession and the preservation of the oral teachings of the Ācāryas, we have previously argued that we must accept the authenticity of such references. Consider the following: stanza 3:4:10 of the *Tiruvāymoli* says that one can reach the Lord Who is in the form of everything, Who is in the form of all religions (*camayam*) without having any connection with them, Who is beyond the reach of the five sense organs, Who is in the form of wisdom, and Who is within the soul, if one understands (*pāvaṇai*) that the Lord is not affected by any of these things. In the *Īṭu* Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai states that the Ācāryas used to comment on the word *pāvaṇai* used in this verse as referring to *bhakti*. Others, he says, used to say that *pāvaṇai* is *prapatti*. And still others used to say that this term represents *antimasmṛti*, the thoughts about the Lord at the end of one's life. In this context the commentator records what Rāmānuja has to say about these three definitions of *pāvaṇai—bhakti*, *prapatti*, and *antimasmṛti*. He says that when Rāmānuja heard about these three definitions, he accepted them, but said that Nammāḻvār's main purpose in this verse was to state that although the Lord is indeed all-pervasive, the defects of the soul will not affect Him.[5] (We should note that if Rāmānuja had disagreed with the definitions of *bhakti* and *prapatti*, he certainly would have taken this opportunity to debate the issue. Rather, he moves quickly on to discuss the nature of the soul, his main philosophical interest.) There is another incident in the *Īṭu* about *Tiruvāymoḻi* 3:7 where Nammāḻvār says that he aspires to serve the devotees of the devotees of the Lord. Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai records here that Rāmānuja used to say in

[5] Īṭu, 3:4:10. [*BV*, Bk. III, p. 138.]

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reference to this verse that service to the devotees is exemplified by Śatrughna in the *Rāmayṇa*, for he serves Bharata who is a devotee of Rāma.[6] To exemplify the service of the devotees who serve the Lord by the reference to Śatrughna shows that Rāmānuja acknowledges this tenet that is so important in the later tradition.

Did Rāmānuja write the *Gadyas*? We think so. Did he accept *kaiṅkarya*, *prapatti*? We think so. The most convincing evidence, however, we find in the commentaries to the *Gadyatraya*. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai himself at the very beginning of his Maṇipravāḷa commentary on the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* raises the question of why Rāmānuja in his *Śrībhāṣya* refutes the philosophers who believe that knowledge (*jñāna*) of the phrase *tattvamasi* alone is the means of obtaining liberation (*mokṣasādhana*), as well as the philosophers who believe that action (*karma*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) both together are a *mokṣasādhanā*. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai next points out that Rāmānuja, after refuting these two views, establishes that *jñāna* is of the form of *bhakti* (*bhaktirūpāpanna*), and this is the means of obtaining *mokṣa*. (Such is the purpose of the *Śrībhāṣya*, which is written for a certain audience, *i.e.*, philosophers of contending views). Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai now remarks that Rāmānuja wrote the *Śaraṇāgatigadya* for those who trusted his teaching and faithfully followed it because he wishes to express that (*a*) *prapatti* is the best means to obtain *mokṣa*; (*b*) *prapatti* is accepted by himself; and (*c*) *prapatti* is also followed by the Ācāryas. Finally, the commentator says that if this is the case, why does not Rāmānuja mention anything about *prapatti* in the *Śrībhāṣya*? It is because he does not wish to reveal the secret teachings to those who are not fit to receive them, as no Brahmin will

[6] itukku emperumāṉār, 'payilumcuṭaroḷi' yilum 'neṭumāṟkaṭimai' yilum collukiṟa arthattai śrīśatrughanāḷvāṉ anuṣṭittuk kāṭṭināṉ' eṉṟu aruḷiccey-var.

Īṭu, 3:7:Pravesam. [*BV*, Bk. III, p. 225.]

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give the teachings of the Veda to Caṇḍāla. Hence Rāmānuja uses only those *Śāstras* which are accepted by the philosophers.[7] Vedāntadeśika in the introduction to his *Śaraṇāgatigadya* gives the same opinion as Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai.[8] Clearly, then, we may say that Rāmānuja himself considers that there are two audiences—the external critics and the Śrīvaiṣṇava community—and thus that two different approaches are needed in writing for these two audiences. Moreover, the content varies accordingly.

(3) Yāmuna (Rāmānuja's *Parama* Ācārya) in his *Stotraratna* mentions in stanza 22: "I have no *dharmas* (*i.e.*, *karmayoga*); I never understood the *ātman* (*i.e.*, *jñānayoga*); I also have no devotion (*bhaktiyoga*); O Refuge (*Śaraṇya*), not having anything (of my own) and having no other refuge, I take *śaraṇa* (refuge) under your lotus-feet".[9] The key elements of a definition of *prapatti* are given here: (*a*) when one is unable to perform *karma*, *jñāna*, or *bhaktiyoga*, one can still perform *prapatti*; (*b*) one should have no other refuge; (*c*) one should have nothing of his own to offer. Furthermore, in *Catuḥślokī*, stanza 3, he refers to the *puruṣakāra*: "Without Your grace no one can get salvation in this world".[10] This line refers to Śrī.

(4) Yāmuna, however, is also not the originator of concepts like *prapatti*, *kaiṅkarya*, and *puruṣakāra*. Rather,

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[7] Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, pp. 2 f.

[8] atra bhagavān bhaṣyakāraḥ sampradāyāgatadvayapravacanena svayam anuṣṭhitam nyāsākhyavidyāviśeṣam svānubhandhisañjijīvayiṣayā yathā, vat prakaśayan . . .

Gadyatrayam, Com: Vedāntadeśika, p. 3.

[9] na dharmaniṣṭhosmi nacātmavedī, na bhaktiman tvatcaraṇāravinde. Akiñcanaḥ ananyagatiḥ śaraṇya tvatpādmaūlam śaraṇam prapadye.

Yāmuna, Stotraratnam, Sta. 22. [*SM*, p. 6.]

[10] śrēyaḥ nahi aravindalocanamanaḥkāntāprasādād ṛte.

Yāmun, Catuḥślokī 3. [*SM*, p. 4.]

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these are dominant themes in the literature of the Āḻvārs, for these devotees repeatedly seek refuge with the Lord of a certain place and desire to perform service *to the Lord and to the devotees of the Lord.*[11]

(5) Therefore, it is apparent that these themes are prominent in the thought of the Āḻvārs, and that Yāmuna, who was Rāmānuja's predecessor expresses them in his Saṃskṛt *Stotraratna* and *Catuḥślokī.* And so since Rāmānuja inherits this tradition, it is likely that he too would refer to such concepts in works like the *Gadyas.*

(6) Nañjīyar, who is a disciple of Bhaṭṭar (a contemporary and disciple of Rāmānuja), is the author of a commentary which is no longer available, although fragments of it are quoted by Vedāntadeśika while commenting on the three *Gadyas.* Therefore, these *Gadyas* must have been written before Nañjīyar's time. Because of the esteem for Rāmānuja found in the *guruparamparā* succession, no disciple within such a short period of time would have so blatantly attributed his own work to the great Ācārya. Also in the *Periyatirumuṭiyaṭaivu* (of the 15th century) there is a list of the works by Kūreśa among which is a commentary on Rāmānuja's *Gadyas.* Kūreśa was Rāmānuja's direct disciple.

(7) The *Gadyas* may have been Rāmānuja's only devotional works, and devotion is the tradition of the Āḻvārs. Also, Yāmuna before him had written devotional works, and in his own time Kūreśa and Bhaṭṭar also wrote devotional literature. Later Vātsyavaradaguru and Vedāntadeśika followed suit.

(8) Finally, we might recall the suggestions of J.A.B. van Buitenen and John B. Carman that the language of the *Gadyas* is close to Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya.*[12]

[11] Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār, Tirumoḻi, 1:9:9. 7:4:1-10. Nammāḻvār, Tiruvāymoḻi, 6:10:10. 3:7:1-10.

[12] John. Carman, The Theology of Ramanuja, pp. 230 ff.

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> To their observation we add that even phrases found in the *Gadyas* are almost identical to those in the *Gītābhaṣya* and *Śrībhāṣya*, as for example, the phrase enumerating the qualities of the Lord.

We conclude that such evidence is strongly in favour of Rāmānuja as the author of the *Gadyas*, and so *prapatti*, *kaiṅkarya*, and *puruṣakāra* have been acknowledged by him and passed along from the hymns of the Āḻvārs and Yāmuna. This establishes the legacy.

When the later Ācāryas, such as Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Piḷḷailokācārya, and Vedāntadeśika, discuss the above themes, they document their remarks, as was the *ubhayavedānta* method, from the hymns of the Āḻvārs as well as from *itihāsa* sources such as Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. To establish authority for *kaiṅkarya* they offer quotations such as Lakṣmaṇa's appeal to Lord Rāma: "You are going to be happy in the mountain valleys with your wife. I shall be at your service, whether you are asleep or awake. Please command me what service to do".[13] They substantiate from the Āḻvārs' hymns the same idea of service: "I must serve the Lord". They connect the idea of service with the concept of *śaraśśarīribhāva* to express that service should be selfless and based completely on the commandment of the Lord or the Ācārya, just as limbs of the body work completely for the soul. We also find that these Ācāryas stress not only service to the Lord, but also service to the devotees as do the Āḻvārs in their hymns. However, these Ācāryas in their *rahasyagranthas* further the discussions on the nature of *kaiṅkarya*, the acts that should be performed, and the attitude that is appropriate for *kaiṅkarya*.

Similarly, these three Ācāryas in their discussions on *prapatti* quote extensively from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (which they consider to be the "*śaraṇāgatiśāstra*"), the Āḻvārs' hymns, and Rāmānuja's *Gītābhāṣya*, 18:66 (which they take as a definition of *prapatti*),

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[13] 1. svayaṃtu rucire deśe kriyatāmiti mām vada.

Vālmīki, Rāmāyaṇa, Āraṇya [*ARR*, p. 152.]

2. ahaṃ sarvaṃ kariṣyāmi jāgrataḥ svapataś ca te.

Vālmīki, Rāmāyāṇa, Ayodhyā, 31:27. [*RS*, Vol. II, p. 206.]

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as well as his *Śaraṇāgatigadya*. The theme of *puruṣakāra* is likewise documented from these three basic sources.

The Ācāryas, for example, quote not only the many allusions to the status of Lakṣmī in the hymns of the Āḻvārs, but also two explicit references that are given there. Periyāḻvār says that even granting that the goddess Lakṣmī might point out certain negative traits of the devotees, the Lord, because He is independent (*svatantra*), would say: "My devotees cannot commit any sin. Even if they do so, it is not a sin. Virtue is what I like. So when I like what my devotees do, even if it is a sin, it becomes a virtue".[14] The Lord's independence of action is stressed here. From the expression "even if Lakṣmī were to find fault", in which the subjunctive is used, it is clear that the Āḻvār thinks that Lakṣmī will not point out the sins of the individual, and that she will argue only for the benefit of the soul. Also Nammāḻvār in his *Tiruvāymoḻi* says that he seeks refuge at the feet of the Lord of Vēṅkaṭam: "O Lord, You Who have the lady who came out of the lotus dwelling on Your chest, (the lady) who is there with the intention of never being separated from You even for a second". The commentators interpret this reference of seeking refuge first with Lakṣmī as an attempt to seek her intercession by associating Lakṣmī's name with the Lord. This is the principle of *puruṣakāra*. In fact, the commentators say that this whole decade (6:10) describes *śaraṇāgati* (surrender) and *puruṣakāra* (intercession).[15] In the same way commentators feel that when Rāmānuja first seeks refuge with Śrī (Lakṣmī) in his *Gadyatraya*, his act is based on the *puruṣakāra* principle.[16] Nañjīyar in his *Oṉpatināyirappaṭi* refers to *puruṣakāra* in his commentary to stanzas 4:6:8, 4:10:8, 6:2:1, 6:10:1, 6:10:10 and 9:10:4 of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. The *Iṭu* contains many more such references.

A word of introduction remains to be said about two classifications that developed in the *rahasyagranthas*: the three secrets

[14] eṉṉaṭiyār atu ceyyār ceytārēl naṉṟu ceytār eṉṉar pōlum.
Periyāḻvār tirumoḻi, 4:9:2. [*NTP*, p. 90.]

[15] *BV*, Bk. VI, pp. 430 ff.

[16] Gadyatrayam, Com: pp. 2 ff.

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(*rahasyatraya*) and the five teachings (*arthapañcaka*). The three *rahasyas* are the three mantras:

(1) *Tirumantram*, which is the eight-syllabled phrase (*aum namo nārāyaṇāya*).

(2) *Dvayam*, which consists of the two phrases, (*a*) *śrīmannārāyaṇacaraṇau śaraṇam prapadye* and (*b*) *śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*.

(3) *Caramaślokam*, which is the final *śloka* to present Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the *Bhagavadgītā*:

sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja aham tvā sarvapāpebhyaḥ mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ.

(*Bhagavadgītā*, 18:66)

Although the authors of the *rahasyagranthas* are the first Ācāryas to bring these mantras together and discuss them comprehensively, they acknowledge by this activity another legacy. A number of Āḻvārs refer to the *tirumantram*, saying that it has eight syllables,[17] that it will help one to attain Heaven,[18] that devotees are blessed with the desire to sing it, that they recite it with ecstasy, and that they are saved from future rebirths.[19] Rāmānuja refers indirectly to the *tirumantram* by calling it *mūlamantreṇa*.[20] Bhaṭṭar is the first Ācārya to explain the meaning of the mantra (in his *Aṣṭaślokī*). His definition becomes the classical formula. Bhaṭṭar observes that *AUM* consists of three letters: *A* denotes Viṣṇu, *M* denotes the *Jīva* (soul), and *U* denotes the connection between these two. Similarly, he explains, *namaḥ* can be broken up into *na* and *ma*. *Na* means "it is not" and *ma*(*ma*) means "mine"; therefore

[17] Tirumaḻicai, Tiruccantaviruttam [*NTP*, p. 179.]. Tirumaṅkai, Tirumoḻi, 1:8:9. 8:10:3. [*NTP*, pp. 227, 374.]

[18] Periyāḻvār, Pallāṇṭu, Sta. 12. [*NTP*, p. 5.]

[19] Poykaiyāḻvār, Mutaltiruvantāti. [*NTP*. p. 646.]

[20] mūlamantreṇa abhimantrya.

Rāmānuja, Nityagrantha. [Rāmānujagranthamāla, p. 183.)

śrīmatā mūlamantreṇa.

Rāmānuja, Vaikuṇṭhagadyam. [*SM*, p. 14.]

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namaḥ means "there is nothing of mine". *Nārāyaṇāya* consists of *nāra* (all things in the universe) and *ayana* (resides in), in other words, "everything in the world dwells in Nārāyaṇa".[21]

If Bhaṭṭar gives a concise definition of the *tirumantram*, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai gives a more elaborate discussion (based on Nampiḷḷai's discourses) in his *Īṭu*. As is evidenced in the *Īṭu*, an elaborate explanation of such a mantra may involve many philosophical points, e.g., the nature of the *jīva*, God's supremacy and love, the means to obtain Him, His omnipresence, the nature of service, the protection of the Lord, the intercession of Lakṣmī, and how to overcome the obstacles to attain God. Comments on the meaning of the mantra are scattered throughout the *Īṭu*.

In the tradition the *dvayam* is held in even higher esteem than the *tirumantram*. Unlike the *tirumantram*, however, there is no reference to it in the hymns of the Āḻvārs. While Rāmānuja mentions the *dvayam* in his *Gadyas*, he refers to it only by name without giving any indication of its content.[22] Perhaps this is because of the highly secret nature of this mantra.

While there is no direct mention of the *dvayam* by the Āḻvārs the Ācāryas who write commentaries on the Āḻvārs' works often remark that the Āḻvārs have given the implied meaning of the *dvayam*. The Ācāryas suggest that the implied meaning of *śrīman nārāyaṇacaraṇau* is that in seeking refuge with the Lord's feet, we have to take the intercession of Śrī (Lakṣmī). The second part of the mantra implies that we have to serve Nārāyaṇa (attained through Lakṣmī's intercession). Thus this mantra condenses two main and exalted facets of the Śrīvaiṣṇava philosophy, and this perhaps is why: (1) it is guarded and handed down so carefully as a mantra from preceptor to disciple and (2) its meaning is commented upon so exhaustively by the Ācāryas. The *Īṭu* exemplifies the importance of this mantra: (commentary on 6:10:4).

[21] Parāśarabhaṭṭar, Aṣṭaśloki, [*SM*, p. 60.]

[22] Rāmānuja, Śaraṇāgatigadyam, 20, [*SM*, p. 10.]

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A man who had come to learn at the feet of Nañjīyar asked him: "If God Himself is to serve as the means to attain salvation, what is the necessity for complete surrender to God (*prapatti*)"? Nañjīyar hearing this was flabbergasted. He cried out, saying, "O what a sinner I have been! I have revealed to you, an ignoramus, the meaning and purport of the *dvayam*, which our Ācāryas have imparted in great confidence and secrecy since the days of Nāthamuni". So saying, he beat his own head in mortification, retreated inside his bedroom, and shut himself in.[23]

The same commentary also describes in the introduction to 2:9 that when the Ācārya Empār used to expound the meaning of this decade in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* containing the essence of the *dvayam*, he first used to satisfy himself that his audience had the necessary qualification to receive it, and only after bolting the door would he proceed to expound its meaning.[24] Parāśarabhaṭṭar is the first Ācārya to give the meaning of the *dvayam* explicitly in his *Aṣṭaślokī*. The *Īṭu* develops the discussion and provides the transition to the elaborate treatment in the *rahasyagranthas*.

Next let us consider the third *rahasya*, which is *caramaślokam*. Though it is not explicitly said in the *Gītābhāṣya* by Rāmānuja that *Bhagavadgītā* 18:66 is called the *caramaśloka*, later Ācāryas call 18:66 by this name. Rāmānuja in his commentary on this verse says that it refers to taking refuge with the Lord, which qualifies one to perform *bhakti*.[25] (He himself uses the root verb (*prapadyasva*) for the word *prapatti* in reference to this stanza). Bhaṭṭar is the first Ācārya to use the term *caramaślokam* in his

[23] 'nāthamuṉikaḷ toṭaṅki nam ācāryarkaḷ parama rahasyamāka upadeśittu orāṉ vaḻiyāyk koṇṭupōntaittai, itiṉ cīrmaiyaṟiyātauṉakku mahāpāpiyēṉ veḻiyiṭuvatē' eṉṟu tirumuṭiyilē aṭittuk koṇṭu tiruppaḷḷiyaṟaiyilē pukku aruḷiṉār.

Īṭu, 6:10:4. [*BV*, Bk. VI, pp. 452 ff.]

[24] empār ittiruvāymoḻi aruḷicceyyap pukkāḷ iruntavarkaḷai yār? eṉṟu kēṭṭu katavukaḻiyum aṭaippittu Guhyamākavām aruḷic ceyvatu.

Īṭu 2:9:Praveśam. [*BV*, Bk. II, p. 42.]

[25] Rāmānuja, Gītābhāṣya, 18:66.

[Bhagavadrāmānujagranthamālā, pp. 169 f.]

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Aṣṭaślokī. Perhaps he uses the term *carama*, which means final or end, to point out that this is the final important verse of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Or perhaps Bhaṭṭar is consciously playing on the term to suggest that this mantra is the final (*carama*) means to obtain the Lord. Later Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika add two more *caramaślokas*, one from Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* and one from *Varāhapurāṇa*, both of which are said to mean the same thing, namely, that one should take refuge with the Lord, surrender to Him, and that the Lord will take care of one's welfare.

Throughout the *rahasyagranthas* there is a desire to systematize the tradition. Whether a numerical device is used, or whether material is organized around a few fundamental concepts such as the *tattvas* or the *rahasyas*, there is an attempt at definition and organization. Perhpas the most comprehensive formula the Ācāryas arrive at is the *arthapañcakajñāna* (knowledge regarding the five points of knowledge). The five points are as folows:

(1) (The nature of the thing to which we aspire.)

(2) Our qualifications and eligibility to attain the goal.

(3) The ways of attaining the goal.

(4) The benefits that will accrue to us in attaining the goal.

(5) The obstructions that we must overcome to attain the goal.

Goal, eligibility, means, benefits, obstructions—under these five headings the entire Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition can be examined. Technically this discussion involves (1) *prāpya*, which means Brahman or Nārāyaṇa; (2) *prāptā*, which involves the nature and the qualities of the *jīva*: (3) *prāpaka*, or the ways to attain the Parabrahman (Nārāyaṇa); (4) *phala*, or the benefits that will accrue to the *jīva* by attaining Nārāyaṇa; and (5) *prāptivirodha* the obstacles in the *jīva's* path and the methods to counter them.[26]

[26] prāpyasya brahmaṇo rūpam prāptuś capratyagātmanaḥ, prāptyupāyam phalam prāptēḥ tathā prāptivirodhi ca. vadanti sakalā vedāḥ setihasapurāṇakāḥ.

RS, Vol. I, p. 36.

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The first Ācārya to bring these five points together in a comprehensive discussion and call them *arthapañcaka* is Vaṭakkuttiruvīttippiḷḷai. He argues that the entire *Tiruvāymoḷi* is nothing but an exposition of *arthapañcaka* (just as it is an exposition of the *rahasyatrayas*), and relates different decades of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* to the five points.[27]

The commentaries must be understood as the transition to the *rahasyagranthas*. If the themes of *prapatti*, *kaiṅkarya*, *puruṣakāra*, the *tattvas*, the *rahasyas*, and *arthapañcaka* are briefly discussed in scattered commentaries on the Āḻvārs' hymns, then at least the important issues are already acknowledged. It remains for later authors such as Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Piḷḷailokācārya, and Vedāntadeśika to pull together the diverse references and reflections, weld them together into a consistent viewpoint, support this viewpoint with the authority of *ubhayavedānta* and the necessary proof texts, and give them a systematic presentation that is logical and easily digested. Hence the *rahasyagranthas*.

The transition from the commentaries to the *rahasyagranthas* is exemplified in the person of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, for he writes both categories of Maṇipravāḷa literature. Furthermore, he is the first Ācārya to compose Maṇipravāḷa commentaries on Saṃskṛt works (previously there had been only commentaries on the hymns of the Āḻvārs), and he is the first to compose *rahasyagranthas*. We therefore shall turn now to a study of such works by him to illustrate this important transition in Maṇipravāḷa literature.

PERIYAVĀCCĀṈPIḶḶAI

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, in his commentaries in Maṇipravāḷa on selected Saṃskṛt works, in many ways maintains the same method of commenting on the works of the Āḻvārs. He uses a highly literary style with numerous proof texts from Tamiḻ literature and the Epics. There are, however, a few important differences between his two sets of commentaries. In the commentaries on Saṃskṛt works he eagerly makes parallels to passages

[27] āka ivvaintarthamumē tiruvāymoḻiyil pratipādikkiṟatu.
Īṭu, mutalāyiraṅpati. [*BV*, Bk. I, p. 95.]

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from the Āḻvārs to substantiate the fact that the Saṃskṛt source is also found in Tamiḻ. This practice helps further to integrate the two branches of *ubhayavedānta*. Moreover it helps the Ācāryas to teach these Saṃskṛt works to the community. Because the devotees are so familiar with the hymns of the Āḻvārs, from this "springboard" they can more easily make the transition to the content of the Saṃskṛt texts.

We might note that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his commentaries on Saṃskṛt texts develops a more philosophical exposition (partially because the very content of texts such as *Stotraratna* and the *Catuḥślokī* by Yāmuna, and the *Gadyatraya* by Rāmānuja, is more philosophical; partially because Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai wants to clarify certain key concepts which he feels are not sufficiently elaborated in the original texts; and partially because he wants to instruct the community in these philosophical points—*puruṣakāra*, *kaiṅkarya*, *prapatti*, the qualities of the Lord, etc.). He is careful to explain certain Saṃskṛt practices (e.g., how Vedic passages are quoted in the Āgamas and Itihāsas) which might not be familiar to the reader who does not know Saṃskṛt literature well; sometimes he is careful to explain why the author wrote his work in Saṃskṛt, what his style is, and why he taught certain ideas. Whenever possible the commentator uses Tamiḻ similes to back up philosophical discussions in the Saṃskṛt texts. Establishing the integral character of *ubhayavedānta*, elaborating philosophical doctrine, and instructing the community are the significant reasons why the commentaries of Saṃskṛt works are important to study. Furthermore, there is a definite interrelationship between the commentaries in Maṇipravāḷa on Saṃskṛt works and the independent works known as *rahasyagranthas*, for Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's commentary on the philosophical concepts in works by Yāmuna and Rāmānuja no doubt prompted a deeper exposition, and so the author wrote the *rahasyagranthas* to develop his reflections.

Stotraratna

The *Stotraratna*, which means the "gem of eulogies", is written by Yāmuna in praise of the Lord. At the very outset in his Maṇipravāḷa commentary, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that Yāmuna wrote this eulogy on God after studying and understanding Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* in order that humanity in general should

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benefit from the Āḻvār's works.[28] He first comments on the name of the text, *Stotraratna*. Why a eulogy on God? Who is he to write a eulogy on God? Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai answers these questions by quoting from the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*: "God is fond of being eulogised". He also remarks that it has been said that the more you praise God, the kinder He is, and the more considerate He is towards you. One of the most important features of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's commentary on Saṃskṛt works is the manner in which he quotes parallel references from the Āḻvārs' hymns. In his explanation of stanza 12 of *Stotraratna*, for the Saṃskṛt line "*śrīḥ śriyaḥ*", he quotes the line "*tiruvukkum tiruvākiya celvā*" occurring in Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār's *Periyatirumoḻi* 7:7:1. Lakṣmī is the goddess of wealth and prosperity. But even Lakṣmī owes this gift to the Lord, her spouse. So the Lord is, so to say, Lakṣmī's Lakṣmī. The word *śrī* in Saṃskṛt and the word *tiru* in Tamiḻ mean Lakṣmī. In stanza 34 of *Stotraratna*, Yāmuna says, "(The Lord's) face could shame the beauty of the full moon". Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai draws a parallel to a line occurring in *Ampuliparuvam*, where Periyāḻvār, addressing the full moon, says, "Try as you may, you can never hope to rival the beauty of my child (Kṛṣna)."[30] In his commentary to stanza 37 of *Stotraratna*, Yāmuna says that Lakṣmī resides in the chest of the Lord. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes similar lines from the works of a number of Āḻvāṟs and uses the term *kōyilkaṭṭaṇam*, which denotes "harem" referring to the chest of the Lord where Lakṣmī resides.[31]

Catuḥśloki

In this work Yāmuna has only four verses, all of them praising the Goddess Lakṣmī and her qualities. This work is held in

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[28] . . . āḻavantār anta draviḍopaniṣad rahasyārthaṅkaḷai labhittu . . . sarvarum aṟiyumpaṭiyāka ivar stotramāka veḷiyiṭukiṟār.

Stotraratna, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Avatārikai, p. 1.

[29] Stavapriyaḥ.

Viṣṇusahasranāma, nāma, 685.

[30] . . . ettaṉai ceyyilum eṉ makaṉ mukam nēr ovvāy.

Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi, 1:5:3. [*NTP*, p. 12.]

[31] 'sarvayajñamayaṃvapuḥ' eṉkiṟa tirumārpai pirāṭṭikku koyiṟkaṭṭaṇamākap paṇaṇiyaruliṉru.

Stotraratna, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Sta. 37, p. 49.

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high esteem by Vaiṣṇavas, and is also noted for its beauty of expression. In the first verse, the second half of the first line conveys the meaning, " You have all the qualifications for getting into the Lord's bed, *i.e.*, Ādiśeṣa ". In his explanation for that line, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai draws a parallel from Nammāḻvār in 10:10:6 of the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. In the same verse, in the second half of the second line, occur the words *māyā jaganmohinī*. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his commentary says: Māyā (Lakṣmī) veils our view of the Lord. Without Her grace you cannot see Him or attain Him.[32] Also Māyā veils us from the Lord, In this way She is the mediatrix, for only through Her is man revealed to God and vice versa.

Jitante Stotra

Jitante Stotra (author unknown) is held to be a part of the Ṛgveda khila. The complete work is not available now, and it is also not known how many parts this work originally contained.[33] Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai comments only on the first *stotra*, or part, containing fourteen verses. That the original work must have contained more *stotras* is evident from the fact that verses 46–63 of *Jitante Stotra* have been quoted in chapter 23 of the *Paramasaṃhitā* (of the *Pāñcarātra* works), and verses 21–40 have been quoted in chapter 29. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that a question may arise as to how verses from the Vedas came to be quoted in the Āgamas and Itihāsas. He answers this question by saying that it is common practice for Ṛṣis who codified the Vedic laws (*sūtras*) to quote extensively from the Vedas in order to explain the proper use of the Vedic rituals and the time allotted for the different rituals.

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[32] ' Jaganmohinī ' eṉṟu emperumāṉukkut tirōdhāyakaiyākaiyaṉṟikkē, jagattukku tirōdhāyakaiyayirukkum eṉkiṟār.

Catuḥślōkī, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 4.

[33] According to the Tirucci edition of *Jitantestotram* produced by Puttaṅkōṭṭam Śrīnivāsacarya svāmi and T. E. Virarāghavācarya, this work contains six chapters. The editors critically analyse the extant text to determine what stotras are original and what are later additions.

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The very first line of the first *stotra* begins with the Saṃskṛt word *jitante*, which means " you have won ". The *bhakta* or devotee is addressing the Lord, saying that the Lord has won in spite of the soul's efforts to nullify the Lord's intentions. God is determined to rescue the soul from damnation. The soul (*jīva*) is equally determined to see that the Lord does not succeed in his efforts. In this unequal tussle, the Lord uses all His craft to win over the soul and succeeds in His intentions.

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his commentary on this work quotes from the *Tiruviruttam* and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* by Nammāḻvār.[34] In stanza 8 of the same *stotra*, in his treatment of the line, " in this fearsome worldly life ", Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai takes another phrase *aham ahaṁkāra mamakāra* (meaning respectively " I ", " I-ness " and " mine "). He interprets this phrase to mean that the basis of the troubles of worldly life can be traced to man's consciousness of the existence of " I " and " mine ". From this consciousness springs a host of other evils, such as pride, selfishness, and sorrow. Man continues thinking of " myself, my family, my wife, my property ", and all other evils follow. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes from Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* to explain these lines.[35]

Gadyatrayam

(In Maṇipravāḷa literature Saṃskṛt words ending in *a* end in *m* when they become neuter in Tamiḻ.)

Since we have discussed Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's commentary on this work in the introduction to this chapter, we need only mention a few points here. The difference between *bhakti* and *prapatti* is explained by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai while commenting on Rāmānuja's *Gadyatrayam*. Whereas *bhakti* can be practised only by certain people, at certain times, and requires observance of certain rigid rules and regulations, *prapatti*, which means complete surrender to God, can be practised by one and all, at any

[34] ' Jitante 'stotram, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 3.

[35] bhayāvahe asmin saṃsāre aham.

' Jitante ' Stotram, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 18.

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moment, and has no rules or regulations to be followed, except that one should surrender oneself completely to God.[36]

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai interprets Rāmānuja's *Śaraṇāgatigadya* in the following manner. Rāmānuja lays down the principles underlying *śaraṇāgatitattva* (the concept of complete surrender of oneself to God). How is this surrender to be achieved? Can one approach God directly for this? He says that Rāmānuja while answering these questions, elucidates a point he has not touched on in his other works, including the *Śribhāṣya*, namely, that one can and should approach God only through Lakṣmī, His spouse, and that Lakṣmī is mother of the universe. The reasons for this are:

(1) God, though the personification of compassion, is also the personification of justice. The existence of cruelty amidst compassion is unheard of (like the existence of fire in water); God, being just, might exercise His qualities of justice and so reject man as an erring sinner. In view of this fear of God's wrath, one has to approach Him through an intermediary. And there is no one who is so eminently suitable for this purpose as Lakṣmī, His spouse.

(2) Lakṣmī is first and foremost a woman and has all the softness and pity that are natural to a woman.

(3) Lakṣmī is also the mother of the universe, and the whole of humanity is her progeny. As such, She has the natural tenderness of a mother towards her children, and can be expected to overlook Her children's faults.

(4) Lakṣmī can be relied upon to lend a patient ear to the petitions of the suffering humanity.

(5) Lakṣmī, with the influence She wields over Her spouse the Lord, can make Him listen to and agree to Her intercession on humanity's behalf.

[36] Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, pp. 3 f.

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(6) It is natural for an erring child to approach his father for compassion through his mother, rather than go to him directly.[37] Rāmānuja also calls Śrī (Lakṣmī) "Mother of the Universe". Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in explaining this description says that Lakṣmī is like the queen who, though her child attempts to sit on her lap with its muddy feet and dirty hands, raises no objection and welcomes him with open arms, kisses, and caresses.[38]

What is *kaiṅkarya*? While commenting on the word *kaiṅkarya* used by Rāmānuja in *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that *kaiṅkarya* is "service", here, service to God by the devotee. But this is no ordinary service. The act of service to a master may be done reluctantly, as a matter of obligation. But here, *kaiṅkarya* is done by the devotee whole-heartedly to please God. This *kaiṅkarya* flows naturally from the devotee to God. Thcugh *kaiṅkarya* to God produces happiness in the devotee, he does not perform it expecting or hoping for that happiness.[39] This is an act which is both automatic and spontaneous on the part of the devotee.

Rāmānuja discusses the concept of *kaiṅkarya* more elaborately in the *Śrīraṅgagadya* and *Vaikuṇṭhagadya*. According to the *Śrīraṅgagadya*, when the devotee does *kaiṅkarya* to the Lord in this temporal world, he prays to God that he may be allowed to do *kaiṅkarya* to God in *Vaikuṇṭha* (Heaven) also. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in his commentary to the *Vaikuṇṭhagadya* says that Rāmānuja advises everybody to adopt this spirit of *kaiṅkarya* to God. He further says that Rāmānuja's desire that everyone should

[37] neṭuṅkālam viṣayapravaṇanāy pōntal prajai nivṛttaṉāṉavaṉru pitāviṉ pakkal nēr mukam pārttu cellukai aritāy mātāviṉpakkal cellukai eḷitāy irukkumirē.

Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 8.

[38] taṉprajai cēṟṟilē aḷaintu maṭiyilē ēṟappukkāl amaittu ucciyai mukakkum ittaṉaiyirē.

Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 23.

[39] ivvanubhavattālē piṟakkum prītiyum veṇṭā, prītikāritamāṉa kaiṅkaryamum vēṇṭā.

Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 133.

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have the same privilege to serve God is like that of the *kalpaka* tree, which accommodates everybody in its shade, as opposed to the palmyrah tree, which shelters only itself.[40]

Taniślōkam

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai in this *Taniślōkam* selects a few stanzas from the great works *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Varāhapurāṇa* *Śrīviṣṇupurāṇa*, and *Śrīraṅgarājastava* and writes elaborate commentaries on them. The very fact that he selects these pieces out of the original works shows that these particular pieces intrigue him, and the commentaries bear eloquent testimony to this fact. The commentaries abound in elaborate explanations, allusions, and definitions.

To cite an example, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai takes a famous *ślōka* which occurs in Bālakāṇḍa of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. In this *ślōka*, Sītā's father Janaka gives Sītā away in marriage to Rāma. The words in the stanza are supposed to be uttered by Janaka to Rāma at that time. In the introductory passage to the commentary on this *ślōka*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai says that Rāma has broken the bow according to the condition set by Janaka and has now become eligible to marry Sītā. But still, with all the humility that is natural to a hero, he stands awaiting the verdict and instructions of the elders. Janaka is happy and mentally relieved because (1) he no longer has the responsibility of getting his girl married (a responsibility every Indian father feels); (2) he has all along been wishing that Sītā, the incarnation of Goddess Lakṣmī, should be married to Rāma, the incarnation of Lord Mahāviṣṇu; and (3) in fact, the marriage of Sītā and Rāma (in other words Lakṣmī and Mahāviṣṇu) had been his objective and he had been instrumental in bringing about this union. That Janaka brought about the union of Sītā and Rāma elucidates a crucial point in the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. The Vaiṣṇavas believe that God can be approached only through His spouse, Lakṣmī. In effect

[40] Bhāṣyakārartam tiruvuḷḷankkaruttil aṟutiyiṭṭa vartham tammaḷavilē paṟyavasikkaiyaṉṟikkē kalpakavṟkṣachāiyai pōlē paropakārārthamāka upāyōpēyaṅkaḷai anūṭṭhippaṉ eṉṟu parōpadēśam paṇṇukiṟār śrīvaikuṇṭhagadyattil.

Gadyatrayam, Com: Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, p. 209.

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She becomes the mediatrix between humanity and God. Now Janaka, by being instrumental in bringing about the union of Sītā and Rāma, has become the mediator for the mediatrix.[41] Such are Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's introductory remarks for this *śloka*.

The author sometimes comments elaborately on passages from the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his *rahasyagranthas*, for illustrating his comments on the themes of *prapatti*, *kaiṅkarya*, etc. by references to this work. One can only marvel at the wealth of imagination that Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai possesses. His deep erudition combined with his devotion makes him describe incidents much more elaborately than the original work. For instance, in his commentary on one *Rāmāyaṇa śloka* he gives twenty-six interpretations.[42] He discusses more than 200 *ślokas* from various works in this elaborate manner. His commentaries abound in allusions, references to both Tamiḷ and Saṃskṛt works, and highly literary Tamiḷ words and proverbs. Sometimes, however, he ignores Saṃskṛt grammar to provide alternative meanings.

Now that we have discussed certain features of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's commentaries on Saṃskṛt works, we shall turn to a study of his *rahasyagranthas*, for both of these genres are introduced by this author into Maṇipravāḷa literature.

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai wrote a number of *rahasyagranthas* in Maṇipravāḷa that are especially important for understanding his contribution to the development of philosophy in this period: *Parantarahasyam*, *Māṇikkamālai*, *Sakalapramāṇatātparyam*, *Rahasyatrayadīpikā*, *Rahasyatrayavivaraṇam*, *Nikamanappaṭi*, *Upakārasmṛti*, *Kaliyāṉarulpāṭu*, and *Pācurappaṭirāmāyaṇam*.

Parantarahasyam

Parantarahasyam, which is the longest independent work, discusses the *rahasyatraya*, or three secrets, namely (*a*) *tirumantram*,

[41] ivaṉ puruṣakārattukkum puruṣakāram ākiṟāṉirē.
Taṇiślōkam, p. 20.

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(*b*) *dvayam*, and (*c*) *caramaślokam*. We find that Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai gives his own interpretation to the *tirumantram*. He establishes the authority for the *tirumantram* from the works of the Āḻvārs. He states that the *tirumantram* is the essence of all the Vedas and is important because its meaning is easy and certain. He compares the effort to grasp the meaning of the *tirumantram*, which is comprehensible and definite, to the difficulty of understanding the Śāstras, which have many possible meanings, and he concludes that it is preferable to know the meaning of *tirumantram*. To this common definition of the *tirumantram* Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai adds the following special condition: the *tirumantram* contains not only the essence of the Veda, but also has the acceptance of those who strictly follow the scriptures (*śiṣṭas*). Because the *dvayam*, which elaborates the meaning of the *tirumantram* is accepted by all the Ācāryas, it is considered to be the practice of *śiṣṭas* (*śiṣṭācāra*) for the *tirumantram*. Finally, he says that (1) the *caramaślokam* (which accepts the *tirumantram* and the *dvayam* as the essence of the Veda) and (2) the *śiṣṭācāra*, express the approval of the Lord Himself.[42]

While discussing the *dvayam*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai comments on the meaning of *puruṣakāra* and *kaiṅkarya*. First, he gives the etymological meaning of Śrī in two different ways:

(*a*) He takes the verb *Śṛṅ*, which means "to serve" in the active and passive voices, and argues that *Śrī worships* the Lord (active voice: *śrayate*), but that *Śrī is worshiped by the world* (passive voice: *śrīyate*). This etymology is the conventional one followed by later Ācāryas.

(*b*) He derives a second meaning for Śrī by taking the verb *śru*, which means "to listen". Relating the active and causative meanings to *Śrī*, he says that *She listens* (*śruṇoti*) to the *cetanas* (souls) while at the same time She causes the Lord to listen (*śrāvayati*) to Her words spoken in favour of the *cetanas*.[43]

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[42] ivvarthattai śāstra siddhamākkukiṟatu tirumantram, upabṛhmaṇa siddhamākkukiṟatu caramaślōkam, svānuṣṭhānam ākkit tarukiṟatu dvayam. Parantarahasyam, p. 3.

[43] Parantarahasyam, p. 23.

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While discussing the theme of *puruṣakāra*, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes from Parāśarabhaṭṭar to establish the greatness of *puruṣakāra*. Bhaṭṭar in his *Śrīguṇaratnakośa* refers to the incident in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which Sītā prevents Hanumān from punishing the demons (*rākṣasīs*) arguing that they are giving trouble only because of Rāvaṇa's command; following the master's command cannot be a sin, and so the demons should not be punished.[44] Next Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai records an interesting conversation between Śrī and the Lord. Just as one adds some cold water into boiling water in order to be able to touch it, in the same manner Lakṣmī prepares Īśvara to listen to Her plea for the welfare of the souls by first talking with Him coolly about general matters. Then she requests, "You accept this *cetana*". Īśvara sternly replies that this individual has committed sins and insulted Him: "All the scriptures are My commandments, but he has disobeyed". Pirāṭṭi (Lakṣmī) next says, "You take all these sins as an object for Your compassion (Ta. *porai*)". But Īśvara replies, "For the sake of *porai* do you want Me to ignore the *Śāstric* injunctions?" Pirāṭṭi answers, "For the sake of *Śāstric* injunctions do You want to ignore Your compassion?" Finally, Īśvara asks Her to suggest a way in which *Śāstric* injunctions plus compassion can be followed without any clash. Pirāṭṭi says, "You make the *vimukha* (those against You) the object for Your *Śāstric* injunctions and the *abhimukha* (those in favour of You) the object for Your compassion". Īśvara accepted this proposal.[45] By relating such an imaginary conversation between Śrī and Īśvara, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai illustrates the role of Śrī as the intercessor. He further states that although the *cetana* has the same relationship with both the Lord and Pirāṭṭi, the Lord happens to be a supreme man (*puruṣottama*) and has the quality of harshness (*kāṭhinya*); in His role as father He has power for the welfare of the *cetana*, while as the ruler (*nirvāhaka*) of the entire creation He can also be severe and strict. To balance these qualities, Pirāṭṭi, Who is a woman, has the quality of softness. Because She is the mother of the entire creation, She has affection (*vātsalya*), and because She does not have the responsibility of ruling the universe, She

[44] Parantarahasyam, pp. 23 f.

[45] Parantarahasyam, pp. 24 f.

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is always sweet. Consequently, She can be a *puruṣakāra* and balance the contrary qualities in the Lord.[46]

Besides the above discussion on *puruṣakāra*, the *Parantarahasyam* also contains an important list of the ways in which *prapatti* differs from *bhakti*. Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai establishes the following point about *prapatti* to differentiate *prapatti* from the common understanding of *bhakti* (as given within brackets):

(1) *Prapatti* is practiced by all the Ācāryas [whereas *bhakti* is not].

(2) *Prapatti* is possible for all [whereas *bhakti* is to be practised only by those born in the first three *varṇas*].

(3) The fruit of *prapatti* occurs at the end of one's birth [whereas the fruit of *bhakti* will occur only when all *karmas* are exhausted and therefore rebirth may occur].

(4) For *prapatti* there is no need to take the name of the Lord at the time of death (*antimasmṛti*).

(5) *Prapatti* is "shaped" according to the qualities of the soul (*paramacetana*).

(6) *Prapatti* involves taking the Lord as one's means (*upāya*) and goal (*upeya*) [whereas *bhakti* is the means of obtaining the Lord].

(7) *Prapatti* does not require any other help [whereas *bhakti* requires *karma*, *jñāna*, etc.).

(8) The fruit of *prapatti* is quick (whereas *bhakti* is a prolonged process).

(9) *Prapatti* is the means (*upāya*) that is defined according to the nature of the individual [*i.e.*, the qualities of being a slave to the Lord (*śeṣatva*) and dependent on Him (*pāratantrya*)].

[46] Parantarahasyam, p. 28.

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(10) *Prapatti* is the means (*upāya*) that is also defined according to the qualities of the goal (*prāpya*) [*i.e.*, the Lord].

[*Bhakti* differs from *prapatti* in points 9 and 10 because *bhakti* is performed by the individual with the faith that he is making efforts to obtain the Lord, which involves a degree of egoism on his part.][47]

After enumerating these points in favour of *prapatti*, the author comments on *Bhagavadgītā* 18:66 which, as we have said, is considered in the tradition to be the *caramaślokam*: "You give up all *dharmas*, take refuge with Me alone; I shall protect you from all sins; there is no need to grieve". He presents a word-by-word meaning of this verse to illustrate the ten characteristics of *prapatti* that he had previously enumerated.

Māṇikkamālai

In Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's second major independent work, *Māṇikkamālai*, there is further discussion of the meaning of *puruṣakāra* and *prapatti*, but the basic theme is the relationship between the Ācārya and the disciple (*śiṣya*). Here he presents the first systematic and comprehensive definition of what it means to be an Ācārya:

> Ācārya means the one who is the foremost among the Vaidikas (*vaidikāgresarc*), who has devotion to Bhagavān, who is without egoism, who understands the *tirumantram* according to the correct meaning—that *tirumantram* is the essence of all the Vedas, the cause of all *mantras*, the document for the inseparable relationship of the soul and the Lord, the saviour of *mumukṣus*—,who has no interest in *artha* and *kāma* but yet lives within the world and follows

[47] bhaktiyilum prapaktikku neṭuvāciyuṇṭu: ācāryaparigraham; sarvādhikāram; dehāvasāṉattilē phalam; antimasmṛti vēṇṭā; paramacētanam; siddhasvarūpam; sahāyāntara nirapēkṣam; avilamba phalapradam; svarūpānurūpamāṉa upāyam; prāpyānurūpamāṉa upāyam.

Parantarahasyam, p. 44.

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the *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* (*lokaparigraha*) [and hence practices *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*].[48]

This definition of an Ācārya establishes several important points. The Ācārya must strictly follow the Vedic traditions, and he can live within the world as long as he has no specific interest in *artha* and *kāma*. The author illustrates this definition by referring to the lives of Rāmānuja and Kūrattāḻvāṉ. Next, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai describes the different categories of Ācāryas: father, maternal uncle, father-in-law, the giver of the Sāvitrī *mantra*, the teacher of the Veda, the giver of any *mantra*, or the giver of *bhagavanmantra*. But all these Ācāryas cannot be accepted as Ācāryas for the *prapannas*.[49] According to the tradition, the Ācārya who is eligible for initiating one into *prapatti* is the one who instructs the individual on how to withdraw from any action that is considered to be an obstacle for obtaining the Lord. This Ācārya is also the one who preaches (*upadeśa*) that one should " trust and be fearless and understand that the Lord, Who is the consort of Śrī is alone our protector ". He encourages his disciple and tells him that by the grace of the Lord he came to the correct path as a Śrīvaiṣṇava. The good disciple (*śiṣya*) will not become proud because of the Ācārya's affection; he will be grateful to his Ācārya for making him worthy (of *prapatti*), and he will always admit that whatever greatness he possesses comes through his Ācārya's grace.[50] Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai next quotes phrases from the Āḻvārs that usually denote the Lord but here are used to refer to the Ācārya.[51] Finally, the author advises a *śiṣya* to live in the vicinity of the Ācārya.[52]

Turning to the subject of the *mumukṣu* (one who desires liberation), Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai records an incident that occurred

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[48] . . . artha kāmōpahataṉ aṉṟikkē lōkaparigraham uṭaiyavaṉāy iruppāṉoruvaṉ ācāryaṉāka kaṭavaṉ.

Māṇikkamālai, p. 1.

[49] Māṇikkamālai, p. 2.

[50] Saccişyaṇum sadācāryaṉuṭaiya ādarattaikkoṇṭu iṟumāvātē . . .

Māṇikkamālai, p. 2.

[51] Māṇikkamālai, pp. 2 f.

[52] ācāryaṉ kaṇvaṭṭam viṭṭāl nityasamsāriyāyp pōmittaṉai.

Māṇikkamālai, p. 9.

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between Nañjīyar and Nampiḷḷai, and concludes that a *mumukṣu* should be in this world longing for the unity with the Lord.[53] A *śiṣya* should be grateful to the Ācārya and follow these principles:

(1) The path of the Ācārya

(2) No discussion of the merits and demerits of others

(3) " Omniscience " about his own faults

(4) Ignorance as to the defects of others

(5) Absence of confusions like (*a*) being a servant (*śeṣa*) for any other god, (*b*) having independence (*svātantrya*), (*c*) considering the body as the soul, (*d*) praising himself, and (*e*) abusing others

(6) Acknowledgement of the Lord's quality of protection

(7) No disrespect to the Ācārya, the *tirumantram*, or the Lord.[54]

After discussing what principles the disciple should follow, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai raises the question of the need for the *puruṣakāra*, especially when the Ācārya already is there to function as intercessor. Because the individual who is in this world commits many sins and goes against the will of the Lord, he earns the anger of the Lord against him. It is the purpose of the Supreme Lord, Who is independent and omnipotent, to examine the sins of the individuals and to punish accordingly. To save the individual from such punishment, *puruṣakāra* is essential.[55] Since Pirāṭṭi (*i.e.*, Lakṣmī) is of the form of compassion, She will help to save the individual; the author here quotes an incident from the *Rāmāyaṇa* to illustrate this point.[56]

Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai next raises the question of why there is need for two *puruṣakāras*, the Ācārya and Pirāṭṭi. He replies

[53] Māṇikkamālai, p. 3.

[54] Māṇikkamālai, p. 9.

[55] Māṇikkamālai, p. 5.

[56] Māṇikkamālai, p. 6.

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that the Ācārya as *puruṣakāra* means that one should approach the Lord through the Ācārya who helps to remove the defects of the individual. And if one approaches the Lord through Pirāṭṭi, this will remove "the Defects of the *śaraṇya* (*i.e.*, the Protector, the Lord)." The author defines the phrase "the defects of the Lord" to mean that, though He is omnipotent and independent, He does not consider the nature of the milieu where the individual lives (*i.e.*, *saṃsāra*), and simply records all the defects of the individual. Pirāṭṭi will influence Him to ignore the defects of the individual who has sought protection.[57]

A key definition of *prapatti* is now given. He says that *prapatti* means that one should abstain from one's own efforts to obtain God, for one's own efforts are obstacles to obtaining the Lord. The author quotes from Kūrattāḻvāṉ a phrase, which can be traced to Nammāḻvār and the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, that *prapatti* means "giving up one, catching hold of another", *i.e.*, giving up one's own efforts because one is ignorant, incapable, and unobtained (*aprāpta*) and catching hold of the Lord Who is omniscient, omnipotent, and obtained.[58]

Before concluding this work the author discusses the subject of sinning against the devotees (*bhāgavatāpacāra*).[59] He states that one should not consider other Śrīvaiṣṇavas as ordinary human beings and equal to oneself. To establish this point Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai quotes elaborately from the hymns of the Āḻvārs to show that the devotees were given a very high position in the Vaiṣṇava society at that time. After giving a quick critique of the approaches of other schools, he concludes this treatise by stating that a good disciple (*śiṣya*) should always live in the vicinity of the Ācārya.

The *Parantarahasya* and the *Māṇikkamālai* are Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai's two major *rahasyagranthas*. We shall conclude our study of this author by briefly identifying his other minor *rahasyagranthas*.

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[57] Māṇikkamālai, p. 6.

[58] bhagavat prāpttikku pratibandhakamāṉa svavyāpāra nivṛtti prapati 'prapattiyāvatu oṉṟai viṭṭu oṉṟaip paṟṟukai eṉṟu āḻvāṉ paṇikkum.

Māṇikkamālai, p. 6.

[59] Māṇikkamālai, p. 9.

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Sakalapramāṇatātparyam

In this short treatise Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai deals with the essence of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy—the *tattvas*, the qualities of the Lord, etc., and claims that this is also the essence of all Śāstras.

Rahasyatrayadīpikā

In the context of discussing the three *rahasyas*, the author focusses on the *arthapañcakajñāna*.

Rahasyatrayvivaraṇam

This short treatise gives the essential definitions of the three *rahasyas*.

Nikamanapaṭi

Nikcmana means conclusion; therefore, this work contains the concluding discussion on the *rahasyatraya*.

Upakārasmṛti

The title of this work refers to " expressing one's gratitude ". In this short composition Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai invokes God and praises Him for having created him and having put him on the right path to worship Him through the Ācārya.

Kaliyāṇarulpāṭu

This is a piece in which the grace of Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār is sung. (It is still chanted in the Śrīraṅgam temple.)

PIḶḶAILOKĀCĀRYA

The first Ācārya to write *rahasyagranthas* in the *sūtra* style in Maṇipravāḷa is Piḷḷailokācārya, who lived from 1264 to 1369 A.D. He was the eldest son of Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, the famous author of the *Īṭu*. Piḷḷailokācārya lived in Śrīraṅgam throughout his life and followed strict abstinence (*brahmacarya*). He was of the strict opinion that there were no higher or lower *varṇas*, and that such distinctions could be determined only in proportion

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to a man's learning and devotion to God. One of his foremost disciples was a Harijan (the previously so-called untouchable class) who became very learned and, in his turn, had many Brahmins as disciples. This Harijan was known as Viḷāñcolaippiḷḷai; he was the author of a pure Tamiḷ poem entitled *Saptakātai*, for which Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ later wrote a Maṇipravāḷa commentary.

Piḷḷailokācārya wrote a total of eighteen works in Maṇipravāḷa style expounding the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. This collection is called the *Aṣṭādaśarahasyaṅkal* (the eighteen *rahasyas*). They are briefly summarized here with special focus on the themes that interest us in this chapter.

Mumukṣuppaṭi 3118

The meaning of *mumukṣu* is " one who yearns after the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*)." Because there are three *rahasyas* which a person has to master for *mokṣa* (a) *tirumantram*, (b) *dvayam*, and (c) *caramaślokam*, this work is called *Mumukṣuppaṭi*, " according to (*paṭi*) the *mumukṣu* ", and this work presents the essential teaching in the form of brief aphorisms (*sūtras*)

Piḷḷailokācārya says that the *tirumantram* deals with understanding the self (*svasvarūpam*). This mantra expounds the meaning underlying that great mantra *aum namo nārāyaṇāya*. *AUM*, according to him, represents the essence of the three Vedas. Again this *AUM* is split into three parts *A*, *U*, and *M*, where A represents God, *U* means " only," and *M* means the soul (*cetana*). Consequently, *AUM* means that the soul (*cetana*) is only for God. To illustrate this idea he gives the following simile: the mantra *AUM* is like butter churned out of three pots filled with curd, since the three letters forming *AUM* have been taken to represent the three Vedas—*Ṛk*, *Yajus*, and *Sāma*.[60] Also when we utter the syllable the *A* in *AUM*, we represent not only the Lord, but also Lakṣmī because: (1) She is ever inseparable from the Lord; (2) She is full of compassion and ever ready to come to the succour of the devotee; and (3) though our mission is to serve God, we

[60] mūṉṟu tāḻiyilē tayirai niraittu kaṭaintu veṇṇai tiraṭṭumāpōlē mūṉṟu vēdattilum mūṉṟu akṣarattaiyum eṭuttatu.

MP, Sū. 33. [*ADR*, p. 3.]

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also serve the Goddess Lakṣmī, just as the feudal vassal who, though covenanted to serve his master, also serves the lady of the house.[61] Piḷḷailokācārya thinks that *namo nārāyaṇāya* is the elaboration of the meaning of *AUM*. For example, in reference to the term *namaḥ* he states that *na* means "negation" and *maḥ* means "mine". The entire term therefore means the negation of self and is known as the elimination of egoism (*ahaṃkāra*) and the sense of mine-ness (*mamakāra*). He follows Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai's suggestion that *nārāyaṇāya* is a compound word consisting of *nāra* (which refers to all creation) and *ayana* (which means residence or place). Since the whole creation rests in God, God is called Nārāyaṇa.[62] The term *nārāyaṇāya* means "for Nārāyaṇa".

The second chapter of the *Mumukṣuppaṭi* discusses the *dvaya mantra*. While expounding the significance of the *dvayam*, Piḷḷai-lokācārya defines the relationship of God to the soul as the relationship between a master and his slave. He emphasizes service (*kaiṅkarya*) to God, but states that such service should be rendered to Lakṣmī, for the devotee should approach the Lord through Lakṣmī. In one of his *sūtras* on the *dvayam* Piḷḷailokācārya says that the presence of the Goddess Lakṣmī along with the Lord actually helps mankind, whereas Her absence from the side of the Lord deprives mankind of Her beneficial grace. To illustrate this point the author cites the incident in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of how Kākāsura, the demon who assumed the form of a crow, pierced the breast of Sītā with his beak. Although Rāma immediately wanted to kill the crow, Sītā's motherly compassion saved Kākā-sura.[63]

Finally, in this work, Piḷḷailokācārya discusses the *carama-ślokam*, which is found in *Bhagavadgītā* 18 : 66, and offers his views on the meaning of surrender (*śaraṇāgati*). While elaborating the

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[61] *MP*, Sū, 41. [*ADR*, p. 3.]

[62] nārāyaṇaṉ eṉṟatu nāraṅkaḷukku ayaṇam eṉṟapaṭi. nāraṅkaḷāvaṇa nityavastukkaḷiṉuḷaiya tiraḷ.

MP, Sū. 95-96. [*ADR*, p. 5.]

[63] ivaḷ sannidhiyālē kākam talaiperṟatu atu illāmaiyālē rāvaṇaṉ māṇṭāṉ.

MP, Sū. 20. [*ADR*, p. 8.]

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meaning of the phrase *mām ekam śaraṇam vraja* (*i.e.*, "take Me alone as your Refuge"), Piḷḷailokācārya paints a beautiful verbal image of Kṛṣṇa while He is uttering this phrase. He brings out the dramatic contrast within the image of Kṛṣṇa, Who is both the charioteer (sitting on the chariot with his legs dangling over the edge, his hands holding rein and a whip, and his hair all awry with the dust of the battlefield, and at the same time is the Supreme Lord Who is announcing that He is the ultimate refuge of all men (*mām ekam śaraṇam vraja*).[64]

While the *Mumukṣuppaṭi* does not make any radical departure from the customary explanation of the three *rahasyas*, this work has the special characteristic of presenting this subject in short concise statements which are easy to understand and to remember.

Tattvatrayam

This *rahasyagrantha* is the major discussion in Maṇipravāḷa of the three entities (*tattvas*)—animate matter (*cit*), inanimate matter (*acit*), and the Lord (Īśvara). Rāmānuja discusses extensively in Saṃskṛt these three entities as basic categories of Viśiṣṭadvāita philosophy. Piḷḷailokācārya accepts his definitions and philosophical analysis but makes the discussion available to a wider audience because he writes in Maṇipravāḷa. He also uses many similes to elucidate the meaning of abstruse arguments. For instance, after defining the soul (*cit*) as that which is immutable and unchangeable and which is to be placed at the disposal of God, Piḷḷailokācārya makes the special point that the soul, instead of occupying the whole body (as the advocates of other schools of philosophy often aver), occupies only a microscopic place in the heart of man. From this centrifugal point the soul influences the actions and reactions in all the parts of the body.[65] Similarly, he mentions that the soul should be placed at the disposal of God, just as sandalwood paste and betelnut are given

[64] *MP*, Sū. 33. [*ADR.*, p. 11.]

[65] maṇi dyumaṇi dīpādikaḷōriṭattilē yirukka prabhai eṅkumokka vyāpikkumāpōlē . . .

Tattvatrayam, Citprakaraṇam, Sū. 16. [*ADR*, p. 15.]

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to the Lord to be used by Him as He thinks fit.[66] When discussing *acit*, the inanimate matter which is completely devoid of knowledge (*jñāna*) and subject to physical change, Piḷḷailokācārya says that God created the universe by combining the twenty-four basic elements, just as a wall is constructed by mixing mud, sand, and water.[67] Furthermore, God created the fourteen universes with their satellite universes in their outer belt. If one asks whether He created all these things at one time or one after another, the author helpfully draws a parallel: just as air bubbles appear simultaneously in the water, so these universes were also created by God at one time.[68] While speaking about the relationship of God to the world, Piḷḷailokācārya offers several clarifying examples. God destroys the world only when its sins mount up and the world becomes incorrigible. Just as the father shackles his impertinent son to bring him to his senses, so God also destroys the world when the world has reached a stage requiring correction.[69] But the Lord does not destroy the world with malice; on the contrary, such an act is due to His affection. There is another remark by Piḷḷailokācārya worth mentioning. In reference to the *Tattvatraya*, he says that one might ask whether it is not partiality on the part of God to create some people to lead a happy life and others to lead an unhappy life. Piḷḷailokācārya says that God's action is like that of the mother who punishes her child who insists on eating dirty mud.[70] Just as the mother's action is corrective in nature, so God intends man to reform and lead a happy life by giving him unhappiness.

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[66] śeṣamākaiyāvatu candana kusuma tāmbūlādikaḷaippōlē avaṉkku iṣṭaviniyogārha māyirukkai.

Tattvatrayam. Citprakaraṇam, Sū. 40. [*ADR*, p. 16.]

[67] . . . maṇṇaiyum maṇalaiyum nīraiyum cērttu oru dravyamākki cuvariṭuvāraippōlē . . .

Tattvatrayam, Acitprakaraṇam, Sū. 34. [*ADR*, p. 19.]

[68] . . . jala budbudampōlē ēkakālaṅkaḷilē sṛṣṭaṅkaḷāyirukkum.

Tattvatrayam, Acitprakaraṇam, Sū. 36. [*ADR*, p. 19.]

[69] Tattvatrayam, Īśvaraprakaraṇam, Sū. 33. [*ADR*, p. 22.]

[70] . . . maṉ tiṉṟa prajayai nākkilē kuriyiṭṭu añcappaṇṇum mātāvaip pōlē. . .

Tattvatrayam, Īśvaraprakaraṇam, Sū. 39. [*ADR*, p. 22.]

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We have already encountered Piḷḷailokācārya's superb use of similes in our second chapter. The *Tattvatrayam* is another case in point. If it were not for such comparisons, the three *tattvas* would have remained an abstruse, and for many, a boring discussion.

Arthapañcakam

If the *Tattvatrayam* is a masterpiece of the use of similes to interpret difficult philosophy, then the *Arthapañcakam* can be said to be a masterpiece of the use of systematic arrangement to determine the interrelationship of key Viśiṣṭādvaita concepts. While earlier thinkers had only enumerated the five prerequisites for the attainment of any goal (*artha*),Piḷḷailokācārya enumerates five subheadings for each of the five usual categories and in this way presents a vast orderly "map" of Viśiṣṭādvaita. Let us first present the outline of Piḷḷailokācārya's "map" and then return to definitions of certain categories that help us to clarify his position on the issues we are tracing.

A. The realization of oneself (*svasvarūpa*).

1. Eternally released souls (*nityas*).
2. Released souls (*muktas*).
3. Souls bound in *saṃsāra* (*baddhas*).
4. Souls that are interested in obtaining enjoyment solely for themselves without rebirth in a place called *kaivalya-mokṣa* (which is beyond *saṃsāra* but not in *Paramapadam*).
5. Souls that desire liberation (*mumukṣus*).

B. The understanding of the essential form of the Supreme (*parasvarūpa*)

1. The supreme (*para*).
2. The emanatory (*vyūha*).
3. The incarnation (*vibhava*).
4. The image (*arcā*).
5. The form residing within the heart (*antaryāmin*).

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C. The understanding of the essential form of the goals of man (*puruṣārthasvarūpa*)

1. *Dharma*.
2. Wealth (*artha*).
3. Desire (*kāma*).
4. Enjoyment of the soul (*ātmānubhava*).
5. Enjoyment of the Lord (*bhagavadanubhava*).

D. The understanding of the essential form for the means [of obtaining the goal] (*upāyasvarūpa*)

1. Action (*karma*).
2. Knowledge (*jñāna*).
3. Devotion (*bhakti*).
4. Surrender (*prapatti*).
5. Respect to the Ācārya (*acāryābhimāna*).

E. The understanding of the essential nature of the obstructions

1. Improper understanding of one's own nature (*svasvarūpavirodhi*).
2. Not properly understanding the Suprme (*paratvavirodhi*).
3. Seeking the goal with the motive of self-interest (*puruṣārthavirodhi*).
4. Not having strong faith in the means (*upāyavirodhi*).
5. Erring against the Lord and His devotees and not repenting for this act (*prāptivirodhi*).

Basically this "map" of philosophical organization systematises (into a single formula) different points in Viśiṣṭādvaita about the nature of man, the nature of God, the religious discipline (*sādhanā*) to obtain the Lord, and the obstructions one might encounter in this endeavour. It is interesting to note that there are five basic categories and five subdivisions, for we know well

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that the number five has great religious significance in Indian tradition generally and especially in the Vaiṣṇava tradition, which has the *Pāñcarātrāgamas* (literally the texts about the *five* nights) and the five forms of the Lord (*para, vyūha,* etc.) as part of its heritage. To keep this number five as the basic division of his *rahasyagrantha*, however, Piḷḷailokācārya brings together some items never before associated and even adds new ones. For example, to enumerate the divisions of *svasvarūpa*, he is the first to suggest that there are *five* different types of soul (*ātman*). Although there had been previously an occasional mention of *nityas* or *kevalas*, the question of different types of *ātman* had never been discussed so elaborately or systematically. Similarly, although *dharma, artha,* and *kāma* are certainly familiar goals of man, the addition of *ātmānubhava* and *bhagavadanubhava* are certainly contributed by Piḷḷailokācārya to maintain the symmetry of his diagram. Of more theological significance are the five categories concerning the means (*upāya*). *Karma, jñāna,* and *bhakti,* of course, are well known terms in reference to the religious discipline. Even *prapatti* had been discussed by the time of Piḷḷailokācārya by different Śrīvaiṣṇavas. However, it is Piḷḷailokācārya's definition of these terms, his addition of a fifth term *ācāryābhimāna*, and his understanding of the interrelationship of the five terms that gives a unique interpretation to the idea of *sādhanā*.[71] According to this Ācārya, *karmayoga* means such acts as *yajña, dāna,* and *tapas. Karmayoga* helps one to obtain *jñānayoga*, which is the knowledge by which one can see the Lord in one's own heart and concentrate on the Lord along with Lakṣmī. Jñāna leads to *bhakti,* which is the enjoyment of the Lord, an enjoyment as continuous as a stream of oil.[72] Therefore, *karma* leads to *jñāna*, which leads to *bhakti* as the supreme state of enjoyment (this we might term the "ladder" doctrine). Piḷḷailokācārya says that *prapatti* is easy for everyone, also for those who are not able to attain the Lord through *karma, jñāna,* and *bhakti.* Moreover, *prapatti* gives the fruit quickly, for once the *upāya* is practiced, anything else will be enjoyable. Piḷḷailokācārya is the first to classify *prapatti* into two different types: (*a*) *ārtaprapatti* means that the individual who is eager to attain the Lord,

[71] *ADR*, p. 32.

[72] *ADR*, p. 31.

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through the preaching (*upadeśa*) of the Ācārya approaches the Lord and by the spontaneous grace of the Lord achieves salvation. *Dṛptaprapatti* means that the individual who has the fear of the experience of hell obtains knowledge from the Ācārya and understands the Lord well.[73] By following the *varṇāśramadharma* but transferring all his burdens to the Lord, he dwells here without fear. Clearly, in this essay Piḷḷailokācārya conceives of the *upāya* of *prapatti* as distinct from the "ladder discipline", an equal, but alternative, path. In reference to the fifth item *Ācāryābhimāna*, respect for the Ācārya, the author states that one who is not able to do any of the above acts may take shelter under the preceptor who takes the responsibility for the individual, just like the mother who swallows medicine for the benefit of the suckling child in her womb.[74] Though *ācāryābhimāna* cannot be an independent *upāya*, it will be a help (*sahakāri*) for all other *upāyas*. Perhaps this brief enumeration of the five types of *upāya* is the most important statement by Piḷḷailokācārya regarding the difference between *bhakti* and *prapatti*.

Finally, in reference to the *Arthapañcakam* we might point out that many of Piḷḷailokācārya's interpretations are illustrated in his discussion of the obstacles to obtaining the goal. For instance, while discussing the obstruction of the supreme (*paratvavirodhi*), he defines this as considering other goals as objects for one's devotion, considering the *avatāra* as a human being, and suspecting that the image (*arcā*) does not have supreme power—prohibitions he avidly discusses also in his other writings. While discussing *puruṣārthavirodhi* the author defines this obstruction as seeking other goals *after* one has taken the Lord as his goal, and so also having the desire to serve God in a particular way rather than be available for any task. The obstacles of the means, he says, include choosing *prapatti* as the means (*upāya*) and then considering that because it is so simple and is a momentary act, it will not lead one to the goal (these two points about serving God in a particular way and considering *prapatti* as a simple act

[73] *ADR*, p. 31.

[74] Stanandhaya prajaikku vyādhi yuṇṭāṉāl atu taṉ kuṟaiyāka niṉaittu auṣadha sēvai paṇṇum māṭāvaippōlē . . .

ADR, p. 32.

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we shall contrast later to statements made by Vedāntadeśika).[74] Finally, we also see Piḷḷailokācārya's interests revealed when he discusses the obstruction of the goal (*prāptivirodhi*) as sin against the Lord (*bhagavadapacāra*), sin against the devotees (*bhāgavatāpacāra*), and the unbearable sin (versus the *ācārya*). Such definitions show how important the devotees and the Ācāryas are in Piḷḷailokācārya's thought.[75]

Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam

Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam is Piḷḷailokācārya's masterpiece. In this work the author discusses the entire gamut of Vaiṣṇava philosophy in 465 *sūtras* beginning with the question "Who is a Vaiṣṇava?" and ending with the "disciple's belief in and obedience to the Ācārya". Maṇavāḷamāmuṇikaḷ of the fifteenth century in his *Upadeśaratnamālai* praises this work in six stanzas. This is a rare tribute considering that he allocates only one stanza each time in praise of others' works.[76]

Commentators have divided the treatise into six or nine subdivisions, according to how they viewed the subject matter. The six-fold division uses the following classification:

(1) The greatness of the *puruṣakāra*

(2) The greatness of the path (*prapatti*)

(3) The acts of the one who performs *prapatti* (*adhikārikṛtya*)

(4) The service to the Ācārya (*gurūpasevanam*)

(5) The Ācārya as the means to obtain the goal

The nine-fold classification is as follows:

(1) The greatness of the grace of Tirumāmakaḷ (Śrī)

(2) The goodness of the *upāya* to obtain the Lord (*prapatti*)

(3) The inferiority of other means (such as *bhakti*, etc.)

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[75] Artha Pañcakam, 5:1-5, [*ADR*, pp. 32 f.]

[76] Upadēsaratnamālai, Sta. 53-59, pp. 28 f.

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(4) The greatness of those who follow the true path (*prapannas*)

(5) The good path of those who are the masters of the scriptures (*āraṇam*)

(6) The greatness of the good guru who helps one to obtain the feet of Nārāyaṇa

(7) The nature of those who are devoted to their gurus

(8) How the flawless Lord selects the soul and takes it away

(9) How joy and the great path both constitute *guru.*[77]

In the first part Piḷḷailokācārya defines the act of intercession (*puruṣakāra*), a pivotal point of Vaiṣṇava philosophy. What and when is the need for intercession? Naturally, intercession is needed when one is at fault or in distress. When man is a sinner, it is possible that God may turn His grace away from him because He is vexed by his sins. Then someone has to intercede for man. There is no one better to do this than Lakṣmī, the Lord's spouse, for She intercedes so that man's sins themselves are made a qualification to win God's love and pity. Here the author uses the term *paccaiyākkukai* (objects) to denote this metamorphosis.[78] Piḷḷailokācārya says that the two great Epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, respectively depict the two concepts *puruṣakāra* (intercession by Lakṣmī) and *siddhopāya* (direct attainment of the Lord through the Lord Himself, without employing other means, the end itself being the means).[79] To illustrate *puruṣakāra* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Piḷḷailokācārya states that the *Rāmāyaṇa* presents the greatness of the one who was imprisoned, *i.e.*, Sītā. There are three essential qualities of Sītā as a *puruṣakāra*: her compassion (*kṛpā*), her dependence (*pāratantrya*), and her state of not being deserved by anyone else but the Lord (*ananyārhatva*). The three separations Sītā experienced express these three quali-

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[77] *ADR*, pp. 33 f.

[78] aṅkīkārttukku avai taṉṉaiyē paccaiyākkukai.

SVB, Sū. 15. [*ADR*, p. 35.]

[79] *SVB*, Sū. [*ADR*, p. 35.]

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ties. For instance, speaking of the three occasions in the *Rāmāyaṇa* in which Sītā was separated from Rāma, Piḷḷailokācārya says that these three separations were of three different kinds and motivated by different reasons. The first separation occurred when Sītā was imprisoned by Rāvaṇa in Laṅkā. After Sītā's incarceration and Rāma's subsequent killing of Rāvaṇa, the celestial ladies whom Rāvaṇa had earlier imprisoned were released. Sītā's imprisonment became the instrument for the liberation of the celestial ladies, and so, for this humane purpose Sītā submitted herself to imprisonment, even though by the strength of her own chastity she could have destroyed Laṅkā long before Rāma intervened. This act is an example of Sītā's compassion.[80]

The second separation occurred after Rāvaṇa was destroyed when Rāma and Sītā had returned to Ayodhyā. Although Sītā was pregnant at this time, Rāma banished her to forest, since a washerman had slandered her by casting aspersions on her chastity during her captivity in Rāvaṇa's Laṅkā. Though Rāma did not believe this gossip, as king he could not ignore it and had to set an example for his subjects. This time Sītā also meekly submitted to the separation, as she subjected herself entirely to Rāma's will. This illustrates the principle of dependence (*pāratantrya*), *i.e.*, no soul is independent, everything depends on God's will.[81]

Sītā's third and final separation occurred after her reunion with Rāma when she returned to the bowels of Mother Earth whence she had come into the world. This separation illustrates Sītā's quality of *ananyārhatva*, which means that she (and by analogy the soul) belongs to nobody else but the Lord. Sītā belonged entirely to Rāma, and so she went back to the other world to await his return.[82]

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[80] pirāṭṭi muṟpaṭap pirintatu kṛpaiyai veḷiyiṭukaikkāka.

SVB, Sū. 8. [*ADR*, p. 35.]

[81] naṭuviṟ pirintatu pāratantryattai veḷiyiṭukaikkāka.

SVB, Sū. 8 [*ADR*, p. 35.]

[82] anantararam pirintatu ananyārhatvattai veḷiyiṭukaikkāka.

SVB, Sū. 8. [*ADR*, p. 35.]

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After discussing Sītā's three separations in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Piḷḷailokācārya remarks that the *puruṣakāratva* will appear in the Goddess either in union (*saṃśleṣa*) with the Lord or in separation from Him. She will correct Īśvara while She is in union with Him; during the time of separation from Him, She will correct the individual. She will first correct both of them only by preaching (*upadeśa*), but if *upadeśa* fails, She will correct the soul (*cetana*) by Her compassion and the Lord by Her beauty.[83]

If the *Rāmāyaṇa* provides an example of *puruṣakāra* in the figure of Sītā, then the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavadgītā* provide an example of *siddhopāya* in the figure of Kṛṣṇa. Piḷḷailokācārya points out that Kṛṣṇa, through these works, has given instruction to the soul, and through His guidance has Himself exemplified how an Ācārya should act. He is both the means and the end. Kṛṣṇa (as Ācārya) describes the means for obtaining Himself. The *upāya* is *prapatti*. His advice to Arjuna is the exemplification of *prapatti*, *i.e.*, surrender to Him. Piḷḷailokācārya in *sūtra* 23 gives a key definition of *prapatti*: "For *prapatti* there is no restriction of place (*deśa*), time (*kāla*), method (*prakāra*), qualification (*adhikāra*), or fruit (*phala*). Only the method of *prapatti* is essential". Piḷḷailokācārya illustrates these points by giving examples from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* in *sūtras* 25–33 to show that even a woman during her menses, or a crow, etc., can perform *prapatti* at any time, any place, or under any condition. Furthermore, the author says that once we have decided to perform *prapatti*, we need not practise any other means. In *sūtra* 61 the author defines how one is to obtain the fruit of *prapatti*: "To obtain the fruit of *prapatti*, nothing is [involved] but realizing the qualities of the soul [i.e., being a slave to the Lord] and being open to God's will."[84] Then Piḷḷailokācārya concludes the chapter by defining the qualities of the soul as dependence on the Supreme One (*pāratantrya*) and being a slave to Him (*śeṣatva*). *Prapatti* means nothing but relinquishing one's own efforts.

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[83] upadeśattālē mīḷāta pōtu cētanaṉai aruḷālē tiruttum; īśvaraṉai aḻakālē tiruttum.

SVB, Sū. 13. [*ADR*, p. 35.]

[84] phalattukku ātmajñānamum apradhiṣēdhamumē veṇum.

SVB, Sū. 61. [*ADR*, p. 37.]

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Prapannas (those who surrender) give up other means (*prakāras*) to obtain the Lord, not because of their inability to practise those things, but because it is against their nature. Other means are applicable only for ignorant people (those who are not capable of understanding the nature of the soul *i.e.*, *pāratantrya* and *śeṣatva*). For *jñānins* (those who realize the qualities of the self) these *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti yogas* are obstructions because they will destroy the quality of the Self.[85] Piḷḷailokācārya quotes from Piḷḷāṉ to the effect that pure holy water, though placed in a golden pot, if it is mixed with a drop of liquor, will no longer be considered holy. In the same manner, other *upāyas* are mixed with egoism (*ahaṁkara*). The simple act of *prapatti* yields the great *phala* (*i.e.*, salvation). This is just like exchanging shells for precious jewels or like exchanging a lime for a kingdom.

Prapatti is nothing but realizing one's own quality. To obtain the Lord one follows *prapatti*, but when one considers the greatness of the fruit of *prapatti*, prapatti cannot be considered as an *upāya*. In *prapatti* we are taking the Lord as the means to obtain the Lord. This is just like attracting the cow by holding in front of it a bunch of grass, which will be fed to it. In the same manner the devotee is attracted by the Lord and also has the Lord as his goal.

In the last part of *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam* Piḷḷailokācārya discusses:

(1) Service to the Ācārya.

(2) Service to the Lord.

(3) Service to devotees.

Without relation to the Ācārya (*ācāryasambandha*) no service can be achieved, whether it is service to the Lord or service to the devotees. Only with *ācāryasambandha* are *jñāna*, *bhakti*, and *vairāgya* (total detachment) useful, just as ornaments enhance

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[85] Prāpakāntaraparityākattukkum ajñāna aśaktikaḷaṉru, svarūpavirodhamē prādhanahētu. prāpakāntaram ajñārukku upāyam. jñāṉikaḷukku apāyam.

SVB, Sū. 167-8. [*ADR*, p. 39.]

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a woman only while she is married to a living husband. Not only will ornaments be of no positive significance when she becomes a widow, but for a widow to wear ornaments would actually be detrimental, since that would lead to gossip about her character. In the same manner *ācāryasambandha* is essential, for only by this can one achieve service to the devotees. Next Piḷḷailokācārya impertinently asks: "If service to the Ācārya and service to the devotees are essential, where is the need for us to accept the *kaiṅkarya* for the Lord between these two steps?" To answer this question Piḷḷailokācārya gives a simile: just as one uses a small stick to help the vine climb upwards, so the Lord is helpful to achieve service to the devotees.

Arcirādi ۱۱۶

Piḷḷailokācārya in his treatise deals with the journey of a departed soul from earth to Heaven (Vaikuṇṭha) and gives the details of where it stops along the way, its reception in Vaikuṇṭha, etc. From scattered references in the Vedas and in the hymns of the Āḻvārs, Piḷḷailokācārya describes explicitly the great journey and, as is usual in his writings, offers numerous similes to illustrate his points.

Prameyaśekharam ۱۱۷

In this treatise Piḷḷailokācārya discusses how the Lord's grace is the basis for all good things, in this world as well as in the next world. With the help of this grace, man after death goes to Heaven.

Prapannaparitrāṇam ۱۱۸

Piḷḷailokācārya describes here the two necessary qualifications for the one who surrenders himself completely to God (the *prapannan*):

(1) There is no other refuge except God;

(2) He has nothing which he can offer to God, for everything, including the affection of near and dear ones, is ephemeral.

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[66] *SVB*, Sū, 123-34. [*ADR*, p. 39.]

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Ṣārasaṅgaraham ১০।১৪

In this work Piḷḷailokācārya gives a concise definition of the mantra *dvayam* and explains that the entire *Tiruvāymoḷi* of Nammāḷvār is an exposition of this mantra. He relates every word of the *dvayam* to the ten chapters of the *Tiruvāymoḷi* and quotes profusely from the latter to document the relevant correlation.

Saṃsārasāmrājyam ৭।১৪

This Maṇipravāḷa treatise describes how man becomes completely immersed in worldly pleasures, and turns away from the path of God, but finally, with the guidance of the Ācārya, returns to the Lord. This work is filled with metaphors; in fact there seems to be an overabundance of metaphors.

Navaratnamālai ৯।১৪

There are nine points that the man who surrenders must understand properly: himself as a whole, his body, his relatives, other people, gods other than Nārāyaṇa (*devatāntaras*), Śrīvaiṣṇavas, Ācāryas, Lakṣmī, and Lord Īśvara.

Navavidhasambandham ৫।১৪

There are nine kinds of relationship that man has with God:

(1) The relationship between father and son

(2) The relationship between the protector and the protected

(3) The relationship between master and servant

(4) The relationship between husband and wife

(5) The relationship between the person who understands and the object that is understood

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[87] pullaikkāṭṭi aḷaittu pullai yiṭuvāraippōlē phalasādhanaṅkaḷukku bhēdamillai.

SVB, Sū. 142. [*ADR*, p. 40.]

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(6) The relationship between the owner and his property

(7) The relationship of body and soul

(8) The relationship of the thing that is dependent and the things on which it depends

(9) The relationship between the person who enjoys and the thing that is enjoyed.[88]

Piḷḷailokācārya says that understanding the intricacies of these nine kinds of relationships is essential for the salvation of man. He also says that these nine kinds of relationship are interlinked.

Yādṛccikappaṭi ١٨\١٨

This work is a brief summary of the *rahasyatrayam*, but the order of the *rahasyas* has been changed to *tirumantram*, *caramaślokam*, and *dvayam* (an order that is followed in the subsequent two works). The treatment of the subject here was criticized later by Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ in the beginning of his commentary on *Mumukṣuppaṭi* as being too short.

Paraṉtapaṭi ٦\١٨

Paranta means widespread or spreading out. As the name of this treatise denotes, it deals exhaustively with the *rahasyatraya* (too exhaustively, Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ later criticized).

Śriyaḥpatippaṭi ١٢\١٨

This is yet another discussion of the *rahasyatraya*. This work is criticized by Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ as containing too many Saṃskṛt terms for the ordinary Tamiḻ reader. We might note that Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ concludes that of Piḷḷailokācārya's many works on the subject of *rahasyatraya*, *Mumukṣuppaṭi* is the best and the most popular discussion.

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[88] koṭiyaik kompilē tūakkuṃpōtu cuḷḷikkāl vēṇṭumāpōlē ācaryānvayattukkum itu veṇum.

SVB, Sū. 144. [*ADR*, p. 53.]

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Tattvaśēkharam 16/18

Here Piḷḷailokācārya discusses the three tattvas—*cit*, *acit*, and īśvara and refutes the arguments of other schools to establish the Vaiṣṇava definition of these entities.

14/18 13/18 15/18
Taṉidvayam, Taṉicaramam, Taṉipraṇavam

Again these last three works expound the meaning of the mantras.

VEDĀNTADEŚIKA

In the post-Rāmānuja period of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, the most colourful personality, perhaps, is Vedāntadeśika (1268–1369 A.D.). He was born at Tūppul in Kāñcīpuram, the son of Anantasūri and Totādri Ammāḷ. While his childhood name was Vēṅkaṭanātha, he was later given the name Vedāntadeśika, which means "teacher of Vedānta". The tradition says that he was an infant prodigy and could teach subjects to his elders even when he was very young; it is said that by the age of twenty he had mastered all the Śāstras. He was a staunch follower of Vedic rituals and *varṇāśramadharma*. Vedāntadeśika was devoted to writing and debating his philosophical interests. Because of his dialectical agility, he acquired a number of enemies, who were both envious of his fame and erudition, as well as angered by being defeated by him in debates. But no one could doubt his vast store of knowledge, his command of the language, and his skill in writing prose and poetry, evident in his contribution of over a hundred works in Saṃskṛt, pure Tamiḷ, and Maṇipravāḷa. He created his own style of writing — rhythmic, lively, and with exasperating logic. It is no wonder he was called "lion among poets and logicians (*kavitārkikasiṃha*)". According to one story, when his adversaries could not humble him in this literary domain, as a last resort they challenged him to build a wall and dig a well. When he accomplished even this task where he had no training, the title "Master of all the Arts (*sarvatantrasvatantra*)" was given to him.

The literature of Vedāntadeśika is vast — his Maṇipravāḷa works alone, which are our sole concern here, number thirty-four.

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Although we shall focus our study on only four of these *rahasya-granthas*—*Paramatabhaṅgam*, *Rahasyatrayasāram*, *Abhayapra-dānasāram*, and *Rahasyaśikhāmaṇi*—as we discuss Vedāntadeśika's contribution to themes such as *tattvatraya*, the three *rahasyas*, we shall refer, of course, to remarks in his other works. As an introduction to his Maṇipravāḷa literature, we offer the following descriptive bibliography of the Maṇipravāḷa *rahasyagranthas*, which are grouped according to the traditional classification: (*a*) independent rahasyas (*Taṉirahasyas*); (*b*) *rahasyas* that entertain everyone like ambrosia (*Amṛtarañjanīrahasyas*) and (*c*) the *rahasyas* that have the taste of ambrosia (*Amṛtāsvādinīrahasyas*).

A. Taṉirahasyas

1. *Stēṟāvirodham*. This work is lost.

2. *Paramatabhaṅgam*. This work establishes the greatness of Vaiṣṇavism amidst the contending schools and religions.

3. *Meṟviratanaṉṉilattumāṉmyam*. As the title indicates (*i.e.*, the place in which (all) vows are fulfilled) this is his Maṇipravāḷa version of the Saṃskṛt *Māhātmya* about *Satyavratakṣētra* or Kāñchīpuram where resides Lord Varadarāja.

4. *Paramapadasōpānam*. This work is about the steps to Heaven.

5. *Muṟaivāhanabhōgam*. The title literally means the delight of using the saint as one's mode of conveyance. It refers to how Tiruppāṇāḻvār was carried into the Śrīraṇgam temple on the shoulders of Lōkasāraṅgamuṉi.

6. *Guruparamparāsāram*. This is a short treatise that is usually contained within the larger work *Rahasyatraya-sāram* and discusses the genealogy of the Āḻvārs and the Ācāryas.

7. *Rahasyatrayasāram*. The biggest and the most popular of his works, this composition focusses on interpretation of the three *rahasyas* but covers the gamut of Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition in its exposition of the mantras.

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B. Amṛtarañjanīrahasyas

1. *Sampradāyapariśuddhi.* In this work he discusses the teacher–disciple succession (*guruśiṣyaparamparā*).
2. *Tattvapadavī.* This work describes three factors that are necessary for the attainment of salvation:
   (*a*) The understanding of the three *tattvas.*
   (*b*) The understanding of the three basic qualities of man [*sattva, rajas, tamas*].
   (*c*) Knowledge of Time (*kāla*), knowledge of the *śuddhasattva,* which is the celestial body, knowledge of *dharmabhūtajñāna.*
3. *Rahasyapadavī.* This work is about the three *rahasyas.*
4. *Tattvanavanītam.* This treatise is about the three *tattvas.*
5. *Rahasyanavanītam.* Again, this is about the three *rahasyas,* with some discussion of how God in His infinite mercy condescends to the level of the devotee who surrenders to Him.
6. *Tattvamātrukai.*
7. *Rahasyamātrukai.* Again, these two treatises are about *tattvatraya* and *rahasyatraya.* Each work has been written in fifty-one paragraphs because there are fifty-one basic letters in the Nāgarī alphabet.
8. *Tattvasaṃdeśam.*
9. *Rahasyasaṃdeśam. Saṃdeśam* means message, and so these two works give a message about the *tattvas* and the *rahasyas.*
10. *Rahasyasaṃdeśavivaraṇam.* This is a brief composition to explain the meaning of just one sentence in the *Rahasyasaṃdeśam.*
11. *Tattvaratnāvaḷi.*
12. *Tattvaratnāvaḷīpratipādyasaṁgraham. Tattvaratnāvaḷī,* which is a prose discussion of the *tattvatraya,* begins and ends with a poem; it is commented upon in the second work.

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13. *Rahasyaratnāvaḷī.* Yet another work about the three *rahasyas,* it consists of a mere thirty-one lines plus two Tamiḷ verses and one Saṃskṛt verse.

14. *Rahasyaratnāvaḷīhṛdayam.* This is an elaborate commentary giving a word by word gloss on his own work *Rahasyaratnāvaḷī* mentioned above.

15. *Tattvatrayacūḷakam.* This is still another exposition of the *tattvatraya* in three chapters; *cūḷakam* means a puzzling knot, and so the author is presenting the puzzling knot of three *tattvas.*

16. *Rahasyatrayacūḷakam.* Here the "puzzling knot" of the three *rahasyas* is explained.

17. *Sāradīpam.* The work is lost.

C. Amṛtāsvādinīrahasyas

1. *Sārasāram.* Although this treatise is basically on the three *rahasyas,* we shall have occasion to refer to its pertinent discussion of *prapatti.* Also we might point out that it contains a discussion of wishing a long life for the Lord and praising Him (*pallāṇṭu,* lit., "many years") even in Vaikuṇṭha. This praise is done out of the excessive love of the devotee for the Lord.[89]

2. *Abhayapradāṇasāram.* This important work discusses surrender to the Lord (*śaraṇāgati*), with the usual feature that the subject here is viewed from the angle of the Lord.

3. *Tattvaśikhāmaṇi.* The treatise is lost.

4. *Rahasyaśikhāmaṇi.* This work discusses the *varāhacaramaślokam,* which is said to be found in the *Varāhapurāṇa.*

5. *Añjalivaibhavam.* This work is a commentary on the 28th stanza of Yāmuna's *Stotraratna,* where Yāmuna has mentioned that if a man knowingly or unknowingly makes obeisance (with folded hands) to the Lord, he will reap all benefits from the Lord.[90]

[89] Sārasaram, *AAR,* p. 35.

[90] Añjalivaibhavam *AAR,* p. 226.

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6. *Pradhānaśatakam.* *Pradhānam* means important ; in each of the hundred lines of this text, the author describes something that is important in the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition.

7. *Upakārasaṁgraham.* In each of the four chapters of this work Vedāntadeśika discusses the help that has been given to us by the Lord.

8. *Sārasaṅgraham.* This is a discussion of:

   (*a*) The thing that should be known or understood (*prameyam*).

   (*b*) The means, such as scriptures, to understand it (*pramāṇam*).

   (*c*) The ten kinds of discerning faculty (*viveka*) that enable a person to understand.

9. *Madhurakavihṛdayam.* The work has been lost.

10. *Virodhaparihāram.* This is the final work that Vedāntadeśika wrote; appropriately, he discusses what appears to be contradictory in Viśiṣṭādvaita but in fact has an internal consistency.

There are certain characteristic features of Vedāntadeśika's Maṇipravāḷa works. He enjoys using a combination of prose and poetry and a combination of languages—Maṇipravāḷa basically, but pure Tamiḷ and Saṃskṛt as "spice" in the treatise. Quite often he begins each essay with a Tamil verse that has poetic beauty and serves as well, as a concise introduction to the discussion in Maṇipravāḷa prose that follows. And he concludes each work with a similar rēsumé poem. Of course, other features of style vary greatly from work to work. It is almost as if he wanted to demonstrate his literary skill, for sometimes he devotes multiple works to the same theme; from a cursory view it seems as though only the style of presentation differentiates one from another. The style may range as follows: (1) Tamiḷ verses with interlinking Maṇipravāḷa prose passages (e.g., *Meyviratana-ṉṉilamānmiyam*), (2) a combination of Tamiḷ and Saṃskṛt verses with linking Maṇipravāḷa prose (*Guruparamparāsāram*) and (3) Maṇipravāḷa prose chapters with a Tamiḷ verse in the beginning, the middle and the end, the entire work finally concluded

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by two Saṃskṛt stanzas (*Sārasāram*). He quotes profusely from *smṛti*, *Itihāsa*, and the Purāṇas to substantiate his points, but curiously, he does not quote from *śruti* sources in these Maṇipravāḷa works that are written for the benefit of all Śrīvaiṣṇavas. It must be mentioned that Vedāntadeśika's Maṇipravāḷa style contains more Saṃskṛt words when compared to the Maṇipravāḷa style of other Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas. But at the same time we must credit him with coining many beautiful Tamiḻ words and phrases that have not been used by other Ācāryas. Force and vitality of language is the result. To cite a few examples, he coins the terms *sāracerukku*, which means the arrogance born out of armed might, and *sēvakappiccu*, which means the obsession to dominate others.[91] Or for the word *koṇṭal* (cloud), which appears in *Amalaṇātipirāṉ* by Tiruppāṇāḻvār to refer to the black colour of Lord Raṅganātha, Vedāntadeśika offers an entire Tamiḻ phrase which means " It was as if a black cloud, formed out of the waters of the ocean, had come and settled in the middle of the River Kāveri ".[92] Coining this phrase gives not only power and literary beauty to the stock epithet of the Lord Who has the colour of a cloud, but also a word picture of Śrīraṅgam, where the temple of the recumbent Lord Raṅganātha is situated on an island in the middle of the Kāveri river.

We have chosen to study *Paramatabhaṅgam* because it contains a central discussion of the three *tattvas* (while refuting the claims of other religions, such as Buddhism, as well as other branches of Hinduism, such as Śaivism). Vedāntadeśika introduces his subject by suggesting that we study the *tattvas* because correct understanding of them alone will help one to get rid of *saṃsāra*. In his discussion of the *tattvas* he mentions several points worth noting. Like other Ācāryas when discussing the soul (*ātman*) in the context of sentient matter (*cit*), he accepts the qualities of the *ātman*, such as being supported (*ādheyatvam*), being controlled (*vidheyatvam*), being part of the Lord (*śeṣatvam*), being his body (*śarīratvam*), being atomic (*aṇutvam*), having

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[91] Munivāhanabhōgam, Sta. 4.

[92] kaṭalilu||a nīrellām vāṅki kāvērīmadhyattilē paṭintatoru kāḻamēgham pōlē kaṇṭārkku śramaharamāṇa tirumēniyai yuṭayavaṇai.

Munivāhanabhōgam, Sta. 4.

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"I ness" (*ahaṃtvam*), being self-luminous (*pratyaktvam*), and being eternal (*nityatvam*).[93] When describing the quality of *ahaṃtvam*, he raises an objection: "How can a *jīva* that has the quality of *śeṣatvam* vis-à-vis the Lord also have *ahaṃtvam* as a quality, for *ahaṁkāra* is considered by all to be an obstruction to the realization of the Lord and to be abandoned?" The author responds to such an objection with logical acumen, suggesting that when it is said that *ahaṁkāra* should be abandoned, that means one should not confuse the body (*deha*) and the soul (*ātman*), and further, one should not have any egoism. Here *ahaṁkāratvam* as a quality for the soul simply refers to the fact that by *aham* the soul can be identified.[94] In the third chapter, while discussing that *tattva* which is *acit*, he discusses the basic qualities *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and applies these qualities to the classification of the Purāṇas and scriptures. He even quotes from the *Śilpaśāstras* to suggest that the varying degree of the presence of these three qualities determines architectural styles, for example, whether a *vimāna* is *nāgara*, *drāviḍa*, or *vesara*.[95]

In the third chapter of this work Vedāntadeśika defines the third basic *tattva* (Īśvara) by discussing the important qualities of the Lord. He lends authority to his discussion by quoting from the *Brahmasūtra*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Manusmṛti*. Also he explains the basic principles of the *Pāñcarātric* five-fold concept of God—*para*, *vyūha*, etc. He answers the question, "how can one understand the *antaryāmin* and *arcāvatāra* also as the form of the Lord?", by saying that those two forms are the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of the first three forms (*para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*). The form of the *arcāvatāra* has colour, arms, ornaments, weapons, marks, consorts, and attendents, just as the *para*, *vyūha*, and *vibhava* have such forms. The quality of *subhāśrayatva* as the place for all auspicious things is the common quality of all the five forms.[96]

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[93] Paramata Bhaṅgam, p. 9.

[94] Paramata Bhaṅgam, p. 12.

[95] syāt nāgardrāvidavesaraṃ ca krameṇa vai satvarajastamāṃsi mahīsarorvīpati vaiśyakāste hariḥ vidhātā hara ādidevaḥ.

Paramata Bhaṅgam, p. 27.

[96] Paramata Bhaṅgam, p. 66

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The *Paramatabhaṅgam* is an example of how Vedāntadeśika takes a theme that is discussed by all the Ācāryas, develops the nuances of the definitions, and clarifies certain objections that no doubt were debated in the community. Whether it is the question of the egoism of the *ātman* in relation to *cit*, of the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* in relation to *acit*, or of the five-fold form of God in relation to Īśvara, he draws apparently diverse topics together thematically and relates them to the three *tattvas*. Such is his skill and comprehensiveness. One sometimes wonders if the common theme of the *tattvas* is only an excuse to deal with "unfinished business in Vaiṣṇava philosophy", for time and time again he devotes a work to the concept of the *tattvas* but covers obscure points in the process of describing their nature. This helps us to understand why he devotes more than five Maṇipravāḷa works to the subject of the *tattvas* (the same point might be made in regard to his repeated discussion of the *rahasyas*)

After completing the discussion of the three *tattvas* as the basic categories of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, the author proceeds to refute the views (*matas*) of contending schools. In the 21st chapter he establishes the authenticity of the *Pāñcarātra* (he also has written an independent work on this subject in Saṃskṛt)[97] thus making available for the first time in Maṇipravāḷa Yāmuna's defense of the *Pāñcarātra* and his own comments on this subject. He concludes this chapter with a Tamiḷ verse which says that the Lord Who appeared in the form of Kovala (Kṛṣṇa) to protect the cows has in the same manner by the *kārtayūkakati* i.e., the scriptures that give the *kṛtayugadharma*, (that is, the *Pāñcarātra*) also protected the cows (*i.e.*, the Vedas).[98]

In the final chapter Vedāntadeśika gives a résumé of all his castigations of other religions and says that the reason for writing so elaborately about the defects of other religions is to establish that they are inferior to Vaiṣṇavism. There may be other religious views with which he is not acquainted, he adds. Obviously he cannot discuss these in this work, but if their tenets

[97] bhagavatśāstravirodhabhaṅgādhikāram.

Paramata Bhañgam, pp. 235-46.

[98] Paramata Bhaṅgam, 21st chapter, Sta. 44, pp. 245-46.

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agree with Vaiṣṇavism, he can accept them; if they disagree, they are subject to the same refutations he has put forth.

The title *Rahasyatrayasāram* is misleading, for it suggests that the subject of this work is the three *rahasyas* when, in fact, all the major subjects of Vaiṣṇava philosophy are discussed—"Who is an Ācārya"?, "Who is a disciple (*śiṣya*)"?, "What is *arthapañcaka*"?, "What is service (*kaiṅkarya*)"?, "What are the goals of man (*puruṣārtha*)"?, etc. This work may be considered Vedāntadeśika's *magnum opus*; its contents are generally known to scholars. Therefore, we shall not discuss in detail its diverse subjects, but rather we shall focus on what Vedāntadeśika has to say about *puruṣakāra* and *prapatti* in this work.

Vedāntadeśika finds that there are five aspects found in the *dvayamantram* that relate to the words *śrīmat* and *nārāyaṇa*:

(1) The intercession (*puruṣakāra*).

(2) The relationship between God and the soul (*sambandha*).

(3) The qualities of the Lord (*guṇa*).

(4) The activities of the Lord (*vyāpāra*).

(5) The special result (*prayojanaviśeṣa*).

In defining these five aspects, Vedāntadeśika interrelates the themes of *puruṣakāra* and *prapatti*. First, he says the *puruṣakāra* prevents the Lord from refusing a request. Though the Lord, is omniscient, when He hears Lakṣmī's request, He accepts Her plea and excuses all the sins of the individual. Second, though the relation between the Lord and the soul is eternal, by the pretext of *prapatti* He acts as a protector. Third, the qualities of the Lord are so great that He takes the negligible deed of the individual as great. Fourth, His deeds are quick; He fulfils the desires of the individual immediately. Fifth, as He is full of all qualities, He treats all individuals equally. Therefore, it is because of Lakṣmī's intercession that He excuses the sins of the one who performs *prapatti* and, in spite of the fact that the relation of God to the soul is eternal, He acts as the protector of the *prapannas*, accepts the meagre acts of those who have sur-

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rendered, fulfils their desires, and treats them all as equals. When Vedāntadeśika gives the etymologies of the word *śrī*, he develops the theme *puruṣakāra* more extensively. First he suggests that *śrī* may be derived in six ways:

(1) *Śrīyate*: she is worshipped by devotees.

(2) *Śrayate*: she obtains [the Lord].

(3) *Śṛṇōti*: she listens [to the devotees].

(4) *Śṛāvayati*: she causes the Lord to listen.

(5) *Śṛṇāti*: she removes the faults of the individual.

(6) *Śrīṇāti*: she develops the proper qualities for *kaiṅkarya* in the heart of the individual.[99]

Next, Vedāntadeśika remarks that *puruṣakāra* changes the anger of the Lord towards the sinner, because the Lord wants the welfare of the individual. Lakṣmī reminds the Lord of his natural compassion (*sahajakāruṇya*) that is tender affection (*vātsalya*) like that of the mother. Next the author states that the reason Lakṣmī is accepted as *puruṣakāra* is because one (the *puruṣa*) who is longing for the fruit or desirous to obtain something takes the help of other men.[100] Then Vedāntadeśika compares the nature of the Lord and Lakṣmī and notes that Lakṣmī's intercession is beneficial for the individual, because: (1) the intercession of Lakṣmī will never fail (*i.e.*, God can never refuse Her appeal); (2) Lakṣmī interceded for Brahmā during Narasimhāvatāra, and as Sītā she interceded for Kāka during Rāmāvatāra; (3) in worldly life, through the intercession of the queens, the king will oblige; (4) the Āḻvārs, such as Nammāḻvār, insisted on the intercession of Pirāṭṭi (*i.e.*, Lakṣmī); (5) *śruti* sources (which Vedāntadeśika refuses to quote in this text) contain many passages about Lakṣmī's intercession; and (6) *Śaunakasaṃhitā* says that one who wishes to obtain the Lord must obtain (the help of) Śrī.[101] Vedāntadeśika conti-

[99] *RS*, Pt. II, pp. 180, 184-85.

[100] *RS*, pt. II, p. 181.

[101] vācaḥparam prārthayitā prapadyet niyataḥ śriyam.

Sanakasaṃhitā, *RS*, pt. II, p. 183.

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nues this discussion by stating that one may also find in Lakşmī all the qualities of Bhagavān. This statement differs markedly from Piḷḷailokācārya's definition of Śrī.[102] While Vedāntadeśika gives Śrī an equal status with Bhagavān, Piḷḷailokācārya defines Śrī as the foremost of the souls (*cetanas*) and hence as ontologically of lower status.

Closely related to the theme of *puruşakāra* is the theme of *prapatti*, for man, when he surrenders, makes a request through Lakşmī to the Lord that the Lord be his refuge. According to Vedāntadeśika, there are four kinds of people who perform *prapatti*:

(1) Those who cannot perform *bhakti* and other *yogas*, because they do not have the strength (*śakti*).

(2) Those who do not have the knowledge about other means (*bhakti, jñāna, karma*).

(3) Those who are prohibited from performance of appropriate activities (*i.e.*, Śūdras).

(4) Those who are unable to bear any delay in obtaining *mokşa*.[103]

Bhakti is preferred if one has the necessary qualifications (*i.e.*, is a twice-born) and the energy (*śakti*) for the necessary activities, but if anyone is disqualified on one or more of the above counts, he is still eligible to perform *prapatti*. While Piḷḷailokācārya speaks strongly in favour of *prapatti* as ultimately the only viable path, Vedāntadeśika states strong preference for *bhakti* if one has the qualifications. While he differs in the relative importance he assigns to *bhakti* and *prapatti*, he does accept, along with other Ācāryas (including Piḷḷailokācārya), the definition of a *prapanna* offered in *Ahirbudhnyasaṃhitā*, 37:18: "One who strongly resolves to follow his goal, gets rid of all obstacles, has faith in the Lord that He will protect him, requests the Lord (for protection), offers his essential nature (*ātmasvarūpa*), and admits his inability to accomplish (*prapatti*) by himself". Next Vedāntadeśika quotes

[102] *RS*, p. 186.

[103] *RS*, pt. I, p. 120.

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from the *Lakṣmītantra*, 17:14, which gives the synonyms for surrender (*śaraṇāgati*): "The surrender (*nyāsa*), which is also called placing [the burden] (*nikṣepa*) which has the five limbs (*aṅga*), is called *sannyāsa, tyāga, śaraṇāgati*".[104] Finally, as is characteristic of the approach of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas, the author relates his definition of *prapatti* to incidents that occurred in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

While Piḷḷailokācārya interprets a statement made by Piḷḷāṉ to mean that the good from man's own efforts (*bhakti*) in the path of the Lord is like milk purchased from outside, whereas the good that comes from God's blessing the devotees with His Grace (especially through *prapatti*) is like the mother's milk that is given spontaneously to her child, Vedāntadeśika interprets Piḷḷāṉ's statement in quite a different way. He is of the opinion that the good that comes from man's own efforts and the good that comes from God Himself Who blesses the devotee on account of prapatti, are both God's doing. Though the mother's milk and the milk purchased from the outside are fed by the mother to the child, the person who is behind the feeding in both cases is the mother. In the same way it is God Who motivates both *bhakti* and *prapatti*. For is it not God, asks Vedāntadeśika, who provides the mind for performing both *bhakti* and *prapatti*?[105] In several other works Vedāntadeśika continues this discussion of *prapatti*. In the *Rahasyaratnāvalīhṛdayam* Vedāntadeśika discusses the problem of what will happen to the man who commits a sin even after completely surrendering himself to God. Will he be punished? The author replies, "Yes, if he commits the sin knowingly". He further states, "Of course a man who surrenders himself to God completely is assured of salvation in the end. But before that, when he commits a sin, he will have to make atonement (*prāyaścitta*) for it.[106] Just as a father will

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[104] nikṣepāparaparyāyaḥ nyāsaḥ pañcāṅgasamyutaḥ.
sanyāsaḥ tyaga ityuktaḥ saraṇāgatirityapi.
Lakṣmitantra, 17:74.

[105] *RRH*, p. 16. [*ARR*, p. 142.]

[106] . . . prāyaścittaviśeṣattilē mūṭṭukiṟatum vinītarallāta putrarkaḷai kacādikaḷālē bhayam piṟappikkumāpōlē.
RRH, 17. [*ARR*, p. 144.]

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punish an errant son for his own good when he commits a fault, God also will punish the devotee if he commits a sin. It is quite interesting that in his work *Sārasāram* Vedāntadeśika raises the question that Rāmānuja, in his *Gītābhāṣya*, has written that *prapatti* is an integral part of *bhakti*, whereas in his *Śaraṇāgatigadya* Rāmānuja has written that *prapatti* is an independent means of attaining salvation. Vedāntadeśika says that though this would seem to indicate that there is a contradiction between his and Rāmānuja's two statements, this is not actually so. Since the *Bhagavadgītā* is divided into three parts: *karmayoga*, *jñānayoga*, and *bhaktiyoga*, only in the end of the final section does the concept of *prapatti* appear. There *prapatti* is described not only as an integral part of *bhakti*, but also as the means to surmount the obstacles in the way of performing *bhakti*. *Śaraṇāgatigadya*, however, deals entirely with *prapatti* as the means to attain salvation. So Vedāntadeśika concludes that there is no contradiction between his two works.[107]

In his *Abhayapradānasāram* Vedāntadeśika approaches the theme of surrender (*śaraṇāgati*) from a different angle, for he discusses the theme of surrender as it appears in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, as for example in Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender to Rāma. He even terms Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* the "Śaraṇāgati Veda".[108] "Whoever takes refuge should always be protected", is a theme illustrated by a number of stories from the Itihāsas. As we recall, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai has also written an elaborate commentary on the same portion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Vedāntadeśika discusses in this work. There must have been a general consensus that *prapatti* finds its best illustration in this epic.

The final theme that we wish to discuss in reference to Vedāntadeśika is service (*kaiṅkarya*), for his comments on this topic are characteristic of his special stance within Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Vedāntadeśika emphasizes the observance of rituals. In the *Rahasyatrayasāram* he observes, "One may ask why the man who has already surrendered himself to God should observe rituals

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[107] Sārasāram, [*AAR*, p. 82.]

[108] . . . śrīvālmīki bhagavāṉālē dṛṣṭamāyiruppatoru śaraṇāgati vedam. Abhayapradānasāram. [*ARR*, p. 119.]

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like *śrāddha*, etc. When the servant of a king garlands his master to please him, he may think that he is garlanding the king, but what actually happens is that the garland falls on the royal dress. Even so, the effect is the same; the king is pleased. So also the observance of rituals. It is man's effort to please God, and this end is achieved though God does not derive any direct benefit from it."[109]

Kaiṅkarya is also discussed in Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyaratnāvaḷihṛdayam*. In the context of *prapatti* the author raises the question of whether or not a *prapanna* should follow the routines prescribed for an individual according to his birth and stage of life (*varṇāśramadharma*).

He says that for a *prapanna*, *varṇāśramadharma* is followed as a commandment of the Lord. Also, he stresses that this *varṇāśramadharma* is to be followed without desire for fruits. These duties are necessary for the individual, because they are the commandment of God; *varṇāśramadharma* itself is considered to be *kaiṅkarya* to God. To support this idea the author quotes from *Lakṣmītantra*, *Bhāgavata*, and the Āḻvārs.[110]

Later, Vedāntadeśika describes how the *prapanna* should perform service to please the Lord. Purity of food, orthodox rules regarding touch, abstinence from sin, optional services such as uttering the qualities of the Lord, cleaning the temple, and preparing garlands, will all be helpful to win the affection of the Lord.[111] We might recall that Piḷḷailokācārya accepts duties as duties, not as acts to please the Lord. Also, Piḷḷailokācārya says that *varṇāśramadharma* can be overlooked when we are absorbed in the *kaiṅkarya* of the Lord. But Vedāntadeśika wishes to preserve the observance of *varṇāśramadharma*. Whatever is commanded by the Lord we must do as our duty. This *kaiṅkarya* should be extended to *bhāgavatas*. If one cannot do service both to the Lord and to *bhāgavatas*, Vedāntadeśika recommends the latter. He quotes from *Itihāsasamuccaya*, *Mahābhārata*, *Pād-*

[109] *RS*, Kṛtakṛtyādhikāram. [*RS*, Vol. I, p. 144.]

[110] *RS*, caramaślōkādhikāra. [*RS*, pp. 228-36.]

[111] *ARR*, pp. 128 f.

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mottarapurāṇa, and *Śāṇḍilyasmṛti*, to support this view. Finally, the author remarks that if one has any question about what kind of service to perform, one should seek guidance from an Ācārya.[112]

We wish to point out the importance of one other work by Vedāntadeśika, the *Rahasyaśikhāmaṇi*. There were three *caramaślokas* accepted by the tradition:

(1) *Bhagavadgītā caramaśloka.*

(2) *Rāmāyaṇa caramaśloka.*

(3) *Varāha caramaśloka.*

The *Bhagavadgītā carmaślokam*, as we know, was uttered by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna. The *Rāmāyaṇa caramaślokam* was uttered by Lord Rāma to Vibhīṣana. The *Varāha caramaślokam* remains for our consideration. This *ślokam* is stated to have been uttered by Varāha to Mother Earth. The *Varāha caramaślokam* consists of two stanzas. Vedāntadeśika gives a Tamil rendering of it and discusses its meaning and merits.[113] He explains how the *Varāha caramaślokam* is the most important of the three *caramaślokams*. The *Bhagavadgītā caramaślokam* was uttered by the Lord to Arjuna, a disciple, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* one was uttered by the Lord to Vibhīṣaṇa, also a disciple. But the *Varāha caramaślokam* was uttered by Varāha (in other words, the Lord Himself) to Mother Earth, a manifestation of Lakṣmī, the Lord's spouse. So here, both the giver (of the *ślokam*) and the receiver (of the *ślokam*) were great.

This concludes our discussion of Vedāntadeśika's Maṇipravāḷa *rahasyagranthas*. We note once more the clarity and authority with which he approaches his subjects. It was not his desire to differ from other Ācāryas just to oppose them or to be antagonistic. On the contrary, he was a superb intellectual, a literary man, and a deeply religious Śrīvaiṣṇava as well. Issues for him were not mere intellectual issues for debate but rather

[112] *RRH*, 21. [*ARR*, pp. 152-53.]

[113] Rahasyaśikhāmaṇi, Sta. 2.
[*AAR*, p. 216].

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reflected religious concerns central to his life. His passion for expression stemmed from this religious basis. For instance, *varṇāśramadharma* was not a theoretical argument, but rather a concern that developed after his journeys through North India when he noticed that the ritual practices had disappeared with an apparent decline in the religion.[114] Moreover, he was genuinely concerned that if Piḷḷailokācārya's position was carried through to the extreme, *prapatti* as the exclusion of action would be disastrous to religious life. He feared such consequences, and so he strongly argued his position.

Maṇipravāḷa *rahasyagranthas* we have discussed; Maṇipravāḷa "independent works" now remain for our consideration. They have been classified as "independent works" because they are of diverse subject and format, technically neither *vyākhyānas* nor *rahasyagranthas*, although at times they share the content of both. In this category we shall briefly mention the *Ācāryahṛdayam* and *Aruḷicceyalrahasyam* by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār, the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* and the *Vārtāmālai* attributed to Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar, and a number of works by Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ.

We have already encountered the writings of Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār: his discussions of *ubhayavedānta* appear in chapter I, and his choice similes and his commentaries on works of the Āḻvārs appear in chapter II. But more must be said about his *Ācāryahṛdayam* and *Aruḷicceyalrahasyam*, especially about style and thematic contributions.

Ācāryahṛdayam, the largest and most important of the author's works, uses a special style in Maṇipravāḷa, for it is composed of *verbatim* phrases borrowed mainly from the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas. Only new suffixes are provided. Such a style, while clever, is also abstruse, for the average reader needs a commentary for comprehension of this *magnum opus*. As we may recall, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai is the first Ācārya to experiment with this technique.[115] *Ācāryahṛdayam* is devoted to expounding the greatness of Nam-

[114] Satyavrata Singh, *Vedānta Deśika*, pp. 20-21.

[115] Chapter I, p. 3.

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mā̲lvār, as we noted in chapter I; let us recall the author's statement that Nammā̲lvār was born in a lower *varṇa* to raise the status of that caste by his efforts,[116] and so any man from a lower *varṇa* who through knowledge and devotion rises above the limitations of his birth should be honoured. A̲lakiyamaṇavā̲lapperumā̲l-nāyaṇār follows Pi̲ḷḷailokācārya in this respect, not Vedāntadeśika, who holds certain reservations. A̲lakiyamaṇavā̲lapperumā̲l-nāyaṇār further explains his position by saying that at the time of inseparable service to God the general *karmas* will disappear,[117] because at the time of service to the Lord, the individual will act as a slave (*śeṣa*) to Him, and this is different from other actions which are performed according to *varṇāśrama* and *dīkṣā* (initiation ritual). Therefore, we can conclude that the *dharma* of service (kaiṅkarya) is different from and supersedes other *dharmas*.

The hymns of the Ā̲lvārs (*divyaprabandhas*) are called *aru̲licceyal* in devout Vaiṣṇava circles. Because A̲lakiyamaṇavā̲lapperumā̲lnāyaṇār held that all the three *rahasyas—tirumantram*, *dvayam*, and *caramaślokam*—had been discussed by the Ā̲lvārs in their works, he wrote a work entitled *Aru̲licceyalrahasyam*, where he establishes this point by quoting profusely from the Ā̲lvārs. The style is that of *Ācāryahṛdayam*. For instance, his view of the meaning of *tirumantram* includes the following quotations in order:

Periyā̲lvārtirumo̲li (4:7:10)

Periyatirumo̲li of Tirumaṅkaiyā̲lvar (8:40:9)

Periyatirumo̲li of Tirumaṅkaiyā̲lvār (8:9:3)

Tiruvāymo̲li of Nammā̲lvār (2:9:9 and 1:2:10)

Periyatirumo̲li of Tirumaṅkaiyā̲lvār (1:1:6)

Tiruvāymo̲li of Nammā̲lvār (3:3:1 and 3:3:6)

The author establishes the importance of the *tirumantram* by describing the efforts, such as providing the Vedas, brought out by

[116] Chapter I, p. 41.

[117] jāti āśrama dīkṣaikaḷil bhēdikkum dharmaṅkaḷ pōlē attāṇiccevakattil potuvāṇatu naḷuvum.

AH, Sū. 31. [*AHT*, p. 63.]

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the Lord to save the world. Later, when He found that the Vedas were too vast and not useful for ignorant people, He took the form of *Nara/Nārāyaṇa* and gave the holy *tirumantram*, taken from the four Vedas and the branches of the Vedas, which is just like honey, milk, and nectar (*amṛta*).[118] Next the *author explains aspects* of the *mantra* (which comes from the Tantric *mantra* tradition—*ṛṣis, chandas, bīja, śakti, varṇa, viniyoga*).[119]

The content of *Aruḷicceyalrahasyam* is important for this chapter not only because the *mantras* are discussed, but also because the themes of *puruṣakāra* and *kaiṅkarya* are considered. In the context of the *dvayam*, *puruṣakāra* is elaborately developed. Though the author uses the word *puruṣakāra*, he also uses the Tamiḻ synonym *cēraviṭuvār*, which means those who help to join or meet.[120] This is a common word to specify the situation of having a relationship with both sides. For example, Śrī holds the position of mother towards the souls (*cetanas*) and simultaneously She is a consort to the Lord. The relationship on both sides is inseparable. She helps the Lord to forget the great sins of the individuals. For those who are eager to perform service (*kaiṅkarya*), She acts again to correct and prepare the Lord to accept the individual. She takes advantage of the moment when the Lord shows some interest in Her words, just as the owner of a boat collects the charge from the passengers after they are seated.[121]

While discussing the *dvayam*, the author explains service (*kaiṅkarya*) and profusely quotes from the Āḻvārs to show that the Āḻvārs long for service with the Lord. Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷaperumāḷnāyaṇār states that one is not to perform *kaiṅkarya* with an aspiration to please the Lord or himself (he therefore disagrees

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[118] . . . ōtaṃpōl kiḻar nālvēdakkaṭalilum tēṉum pālum amutumākac cērttu piriṭṭeṭuttu . . .

Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 8.

[119] Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 16.

[120] cēraviṭuvārkku iraṇṭitattilum uṟavu vēṇṭukaiyālē . . .

Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 116.

[121] ōṭamēṟṟik kūli koḷvāraip pōlē aparādhaṅkaḷaiyum poṟuppittu . . .

Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 126.

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with Vedāntadeśika's position).[122] *Kaiṅkarya* should be performed completely according to the commandment of the Lord. If one has any selfishness, then this is just like food in which he finds a worm or hair (*i.e.*, he must reject it).[123] A wise servant of God (*jñānadāsa*) should not offer himself to the Lord, for now he knows that he already belongs to the Lord. On the other hand, he should not think about his metaphysical status as a mere slave of the Lord (*śeṣatva*), if the Lord chooses lovingly to reverse the metaphysical relationship and treat him as equal or even as superior.[124]

We might offer one last remark in regard to the style of *Aruḷicceyalrahasyam*. Because the author wishes to explain the *rahasyas* to the devotee of average education, he may begin an explanation in colloquial Tamiḷ, proceed to use Saṃskṛt terminology to indicate the special and technical nature of Vedāntic thought, and finally conclude with quotations from the Ācāryas. He is careful to introduce and summarize each chapter. Like other Ācāryas, Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṇār is first and foremost a teacher, proud of his tradition and desirous that every member of the community should appreciate its richness. Content and style follow accordingly.

The *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* and the *Vārtāmālai* are attributed to Piṉpaḷakiyaperumāḷjīyar, but we have some reservations as to whether he is really the author. Let us consider the evidence. Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ in the 15th century records in his work, the *Upadeśaratnamālai*, that Piṉpaḷakiyaperumāḷjīyar is a dedicated disciple of Nampiḷḷai, but he makes no reference to any work written by Piṉpaḷakiyaperumāḷjīyar, whereas for other Ācāryas he includes both biographical data *and* the names of any works they wrote.[125] Another treatise, *Periyatirumuṭiyaṭaivu* by Kantāṭaināyaṉ of the sixteenth century, mentions that Piṉpaḷakiyaperumāḷjīyar is a disciple of Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, but this author also

[122] Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, pp. 180 f.

[123] . . . ūṇilē puḻuvum mayirum paṭṭāppōlē bhogavirōdhi.
Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 182

[124] Aruḷicceyalrahasyam, p. 183.

[125] Maṇvāḷamāmuṉikaḷ, Upadeśaratnamālai, Sta. 66.

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does not mention that this Ācārya wrote treatises, although he too usually provides such information. We can safely assume from these two accounts that Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar must have been a disciple not only of Nampiḷḷai, but also of Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai. In as much as he studied under two preceptors—one of whom was himself a disciple of the other—he must have been considerably younger than Nampiḷḷai and, perhaps, to a certain extent, than Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai too. We must keep this point in mind when we survey internal evidence in the works themselves. First, we must note that the *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* contains a number of stanzas from the *Prapannāmṛtam*, a work later in date than the period of Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar. Secondly, a stanza by Vedāntadeśika and another line from the *Ācāryahṛdayam* by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār have also been quoted in that work. Both Vedāntadeśika and Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷap-perumāḷnāyaṉār were contemporaries of Piḷḷailokācārya. If we rely on the information furnished in the *Upadeśaratnamālai* and the *Periyatirumuṭiyaṭaivu*, Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar must have been a younger contemporary of Nampiḷḷai and Periyavāccāṉ-piḷḷai. If this is correct, there is very little chance of his quoting from *Ācāryahṛdayam*, a work by Aḻakiyamāṇavāḷapperumāḷ-nāyaṉār, who was the son of Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, a contemporary of Peryavāccāṉpiḷḷai. The same conclusion applies to the stanza by Vedāntadeśika, who was a contemporary of Aḻakiya-maṇavāḷapperumāḷnāyaṉār. What might have happened was that Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar gathered all the materials and did the preliminary work, and one of his disciples completed the task. Also, in a *taṉiyaṉ* it has been stated that Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar used to give discourses on the lives of the Āḻvārs and the Ācāryas.[126] It is possible that what was given out in his discourses was edited into a book by one of his disciples.

Whoever may have been the author of the *Guruparampa-rāprabhāvam*, no one can ignore the importance of this book for the biographical sketches of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas that it provides. We may recall our discussion in chapter I regarding the reliability of its data and its importance for the history of the *guruparampara*.

[126] *GPP*, p. 598.

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Let us next consider the *Vārtāmālai*. While this work is also attributed to Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar, we have recently verified that the original manuscripts of this work available in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library in Madras contain no colophon in the work stating that it was written or compiled by Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar. The work contains the record of conversations between Nampiḷḷai and Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar himself. If the latter had indeed been the editor of this anthology, would he have included a conversation between himself and Nampiḷḷai in this anthology of the sayings of Vaiṣṇava preceptors? Of course he might have done so, but this point lends weight to the supposition that Piṉpaḻakiyaperumāḷjīyar might not have been the editor of this work.

This book is not a mere recording of the sayings of the preceptors, for it also gives valuable insight into their lives, their psychology, and their dedication to God and to the Āḻvārs. Even the social conditions of their times are recorded. *Vārtāmālai* has been classified into different parts, such as *tirumantram*, *dvayam*, *caramaślokam*, and *prapatti*. It is a useful anthology to supplement research based on other *sampradāya* works.

Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ (1370—1443 A.D.) was born to Tikaḻakiṭantāṉ Tirunāviṟuṭayapirāṉ Tātaraṇṇaṉ (who was a disciple of Piḷḷailokācārya) and Śrīraṅganācciyār in the town Kiṭāram of the Pāṇḍya kingdom. He was the first Ācārya to comment extensively on the Maṇipravāḻa works of an earlier Ācārya—Piḷḷailokācārya, who was his father's Ācārya. Also, he wrote commentaries on the works of other Ācāryas and one Āḻvār. The works of this author are as follows:

A. Commentaries on :

1. *Tattvatrayam* by Piḷḷailokācārya.
2. *Rahasyatrayam* by Piḷḷailokācārya.
3. *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam* by Piḷḷailokācārya.
4. *Ācāryahṛdayam* by Aḻakiyamaṇavāḻapperumāḷnāyaṉār.
5. *Jñānasāram* by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār.

(Yajna-murti)

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6. *Prameyasāram* by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār.
7. *Periyāḻvārtirumoḻi* by Periyāḻvār (which technically should have been included in the second chapter).
8. *Irāmānūcanūṟṟantāti* by Tiruvaraṅkattamutaṉār.

B. Collection and documentation of the sources for the proof texts found in the following works:

1. *Iṭu* (*Iṭṭiṉpramāṇatiraṭṭu*).
2. *Tattvatrayam* (*Tattvatrayattiṉpramāṇatiraṭṭu*).
3. *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam* (*Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇapramāṇatiraṭṭu*). 123

(He also wrote independent works in pure Tamiḻ, such as *Upadēcarattiṉamālai*, *Tiruvāymoḻinūṟṟantāti*, and *Ārtiprapantam*, as well as one Saṃskṛt work *Yatirājaviṃśati*. He has one Maṇipravāḷa independent work to his credit, *Tiruvārādhanakramam*, which is about the everyday worship at the home shrine.) Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ's style is very simple and easy to understand; indeed, he was given the title, "the crown jewel among those who explain elaborately" (*viśadavākśikhāmaṇi*), due to his command of words and his ability to explain abstruse subjects clearly. His careful introductions to each treatise are a summary of pertinent details and his purpose for writing each composition. While his works certainly warrant detailed study, we shall confine ourselves to one discussion, which will simultaneously help to draw this whole topic to a conclusion. We shall focus on his definition of *vātsalya* found in verses 24 and 25 of *jñānasāra* by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār. In his *Jñānasāra* Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār offers two different definitions of *vātsalya*. In the first verse he states that though the individual has thousands of defects, the Lord will ignore them [because of His tender solicitude or *vātsalya*].[127] In the second verse he says that the mother cow eats the filth of the new born calf. In the same manner, the Lord will accept the defects of the individual.[128] Thus this author who

[127] Śrīmatkṛṣṇasamāhvāya namo yāmunasūnave: yatkaṭakṣaikalakṣyāṇām sulabhaḥ śrīdharaḥ sadā.

GPP, p. IX.

[128] Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār, Jñānasāram, Sta. 24.25, p. 44.

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is a contemporary of Rāmānuja offers two contrary meanings, showing the elasticity of his commentary resulting from the desire to find different etymologies or different interpretations. When Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai later wrote a commentary on the term *vātsalya* which appeared in the *Gadyatrayam*, he mentions only the second meaning given by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār and says that *vātsalya* means that because of His affection towards the devotees, the Lord takes their faults (*doṣas*) as good qualities (*guṇas*).[129] Piḷḷailokācārya follows suit. While commenting on the same word in the same commentary, Vedāntadeśika accepts the first meaning given by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷemperumāṉār and actively refutes the second meaning accepted by Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, for he says that *vātsalya* means that God ignores the *doṣas* and does not accept them as *guṇas*.[130] Finally, Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ makes a compromise between these two meanings, for he says that stanza 24 in *Jñānasāra* refers to sins committed after one takes refuge (*śaraṇāgati*). The Lord will ignore such sins. Then Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ states that stanza 25 refers to the sins committed before *śaraṇāgati*, which the Lord accepts. Thus a clever combination between the two conflicting interpretations is achieved.[131]

In this discussion of *vātsalya* we have traced the early openness of interpretation, then the conscious choice of one interpretation as preferable, next the active refutation of such a preferred choice by a predecessor, and finally an attempted compromise. We do not wish to rehearse all the arguments for *kaiṅkarya*, *prapatti*, or *puruṣakāra* again, but a similar movement might be noted, although we cannot attribute to Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ the general role of a compromiser. He is first and foremost a disciple of Piḷḷailokācārya, and generally follows his Master's interpretation.

The issue of the development of doctrine again must be discussed now that we have traced the contribution of the *sam-*

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[129] Vātsalya—taṉ prēmattālē āśritagatamāṉa dōṣamum guṇamāyat tōṟṟukai.
Gadyatrayam, p. 49.

[130] . . . doṣatiraskariṇī pritiḥ.
Gadyatrayam, p. 49.

[131] Jñānasāram, pp. 448.

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pradāyagranthas, i.e., the *rahasyagranthas* and the "Independent works". Let us summarize our findings:

(1) There was the continuity of a legacy from the Āḻvārs through Yāmuna and Rāmānuja to the later Ācāryas.

(2) Refinement of explanation had been honoured and encouraged in the tradition. We should point out that because most of the Ācāryas lived at Śrīraṅgam this place became the intellectual centre of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. One must visualise the context—the discourses by Ācāryas in the temple *maṇṭapam*, the daily casual meetings of Ācāryas sitting under the shade of a tree, when they reflected on different verses in the *Nālāyiram* or tried to refine philosophical points. An understanding of the oral tradition of the *sampradāya* is essential for understanding the nature of Maṇipravāḷa literature.

(3) But even in these vital conversations where opinions were heard and debated, there arose some differences of such magnitude that they could not simply be ignored.

(4) Consequently, there were differences of interpretation on key issues—especially between Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika.

Such differences never erupted into a split in the *sampradāya* between the 12th and 15th centuries because of the respect for the *guruparampará* succession. The continuity, in this sense, was determined by the honour given to the successive Ācāryas. But the Ācāryas all acknowledged that they belonged to the Rāmānuja *darśana* (view). Consequently, the Ācāryas acknowledged the general outlines of the school. (Hence the legacy based on the general content of Viśiṣṭādvaita was understood; it was only the refinement of that general outline which was debated.) Vedāntadeśika, for instance, never saw himself as outside the *sampradāya*. He himself said:

> "There is no contradiction in meaning among the disciples of *bhāṣyakārasampradāya* (*i.e.*, the succession from Rāmānuja). The difference is only in arranging the prose order.

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> Though the practice of ritual (*ācāra*) may differ from place to place, time to time, and stage to stage, that difference is allowed by the Śāstra. The crime of the thief is usually attributed to the dead man; in the same manner the people who are not intelligent enough, if they obtain approval for their interpretation, that is their defect, not [the defect] of the scripture ".[132]

Thus Vedāntadeśika is of the opinion that the scripture contains one meaning: there are no contradictions in the scriptures, although men of lesser intelligence may make it appear so. Therefore, we surmise that there was considerable freedom of interpretation within the general position of the school, especially in the early period, although by the time of Piḷḷailokācārya and Vedāntadeśika differences of opinion were beginning to crystallize. As we have seen, Piḷḷailokācārya said that Śrī was the highest among the souls (*cetanas*), while Vedāntadeśika said Śrī had the same ontological status as the Lord. Piḷḷailokācārya said the fault of the individual (*doṣa*) was a *guṇa* for the Lord, while Vedāntadeśika said the Lord ignores the defects of the individual. Piḷḷailokācārya said the grace of God was spontaneous, but Vedāntadeśika declared that man must show some eagerness. Piḷḷailokācārya held that anyone might be an Ācārya if he had devotion and learning, but Vedāntadeśika insisted that only Brahmins should be qualified for such a position. Piḷḷailokācārya was willing to ignore the regulations of *varṇāśramadharma* if they conflicted with *kaiṅkarya* but Vedāntadeśika strictly adhered to *varṇāśramadharma*. Many such differences could be pointed out between these two Ācāryas. Although the gulf was incipient in the 14th century, it took another few centuries to be formally acknowledged.

In the 18th century the administration of the temples (based on Śrīraṅgam as a model) was under the control of eight hereditary authorities (*aṣṭadiggajas*) who had been established by Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ. Consequently, the *guruparamparā* succession for these seats was traced through Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ back to Piḷḷailokācārya, to Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, Nañjīyar, Nampiḷḷai, Bhaṭṭar and Piḷḷāṉ. However, those Śrī-

[132] Sampradāya parśuddhi, *ARR*, pp. 14 f.

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vaiṣṇavas who traced their *guruparampará* through Vedāntadeśika and Vātsyavaradaguru (Vedāntadeśika's Ācārya) did not have temple administrations under their control, although they desired this office. Consequently, there was some agitation among them to secure this privilege. At that time, to strengthen their sense of difference from the other *guruparamparā*, they began to cull out the philosophical positions of Vedāntadeśika that differed from those of Piḷḷailokācārya. We think that this activity led to the sense of a separate school and the crystallization of doctrine, for now there was a religio-political movement based on difference and a struggle for power. We can legitimately speak of the *Teṉkalai* and the *Vaṭakalai* as two distinct schools from this period. Now at this time there was also a tremendous spurt of writing in the Vedāntadeśika *sampradāya* to document the distinct philosophy of the school, to furnish commentaries for Vedāntadeśika's *rahasyas* (as Maṇavāḷamāmuṉikaḷ had previously done for Piḷḷailokācārya's works), and to write commentaries on the hymns of the Āḻvārs to reflect their doctrine. (While they accepted Piḷḷāṉ's commentary, they ignored those written by Vaṭakkuttiruvītippiḷḷai, Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai, and others, because of differing interpretations.) Therefore, we may conclude that a struggle for temple administration led to the self-consciousness of different *sampradāya* views, to a development of doctrine, and finally to a new literature to rationalize this activity. If Vedāntadeśika paid homage to *Rāmānujasampradāya*, his followers paid homage *first* to *Vedāntadeśikasampradāya*.

What once was enjoyable conversation shared under the tree in places like Śrīraṅgam became argument to defeat the opponent. Unfortunately, it split " the family ".

Thus two schools, two doctrines—a legacy shared but severed.

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APPENDIX I

The earliest reference to Maṇipravāḷa is found in the commentary called *Jayadhavala* written in Saṃskṛt by Jinasena (837 A.D.) on the Jain work *Ṣaḍkhaṇḍāgama*. In it, he says that the work had been written in Maṇipravāḷa style—a mixture of Saṃskṛt and Prākṛt, implying thereby that the Maṇipravāḷa style consists of a mixture of Saṃskṛt and Prākṛt words.

Abhinavagupta (11th century A.D.) in his commentary on Baharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra* refers to Bharata's contention that *nāṭya* can be staged in a language formed as a mixture of Saṃskṛt and the local language. He compares this style with the Maṇipravāḷa style prevalent in South India. He further says that in Kashmir, this style is known as *śāttakulam*—a mixture of Saṃskṛt and the (local) Kashmiri languages.

Now we shall turn to the study of Maṇipravāḷa styles in Dravidian languages as this study is essential for a correct understanding of the term Maṇipravāḷa in Tamil.

Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam:

First, we shall take the Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam as that language is not only rich in original works composed entirely in Maṇipravāḷa style but also contains an independent grammar on the Maṇipravāḷa style. During the time of the Perumāḷ dynasty in Kerala, Tamiḷ dwindled in importance among the populace there and Saṃskṛt began to increase in popularity. In that period, dance dramas called *kūttukuṭṭyāḷṭam* were very popular amongst the masses. The language of these dance dramas was a free mixture of Saṃskṛt and Malayāḷam which can be said to be the origin of the Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam.

In that same period, apart from these dance dramas there were *purāṇa-pravacana* (exposition of the scriptures) *vedāntavicāra* (philosophical discussion among scholars) *vidvāṇkaḷkūṭṭam* (meeting of scholars), *kavijñarkaḷ-kūṭṭam* (meeting of poets), etc. In all these Saṃskṛt was freely used along with Tamiḷ. In this period, independent works also in the Maṇipravāḷa style began to be composed. It is interesting to note that works in the Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam were written mostly in poetry. P. K. Parameswaran Nair in his *History of Malayalam Literature*, pp. 18-19, says:

> While Chentamil was encouraged by the Chera kings and Sanskrit was upheld by the Nambutiris, Malayalam, the spoken tongue of the common people, was left severely alone. If, therefore, the vernacular did not develop fast enough into a literary language, the reason must be sought for in the neglect it suffered at the hands of the higher-ups in society, the custodians of literature. But it had that innate vitality which, given the necessary incentive and patterns to emulate, could

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This appendix is based on "Maṇipravāḷa Bhāṣa" by Dr. T. Kodanda Ramayya, which appeared in *Bharatà*, 49:12 (1972). pp. 26–35, and 50:1 (1973), pp. 33–42.

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> burst forth into a literary medium . . . The coalescence of the two languages went on over the centuries and eventually the resultant medium was put to literary purposes also.

Though it is not possible to state the exact date when works in Malayāḷam in the Maṇipravāḷa style began to be written, there are indications that the first work written in that style in Malayāḷam was a comedy play written by a poet called Dolan who was in the court of the king Kulaśekharaperumāḷ in the century A.D.

As the literature in Maṇipravāḷa style grew in Malayāḷam, an independent grammar on Maṇipravāḷa style called *Līlātilakam* came to be written. The period of this work is said to be the fourteenth century A.D. From a perusal of the names of the works quoted as references in the *Līlātilakam*, one might conclude that the Maṇipravāḷa style had come into prominence in Malayāḷam four or five centuries earlier. Notable among the references quoted in *Līlātilakam* are those from the works entitled *Devatāstuti*, *Rājapraśaṃśā*, *Sthalamāhātmyam*, *Prakṛticitra*, *Sandeśakāvya*, *Parvābhivarṇana*, etc.

Līlātilakam classifies the Maṇipravāḷa style into nine types. It further gives the kind of words that should be used in Maṇipravāḷa. It says that only such Malayaḷām words as are used by the three higher *varṇas*—Kṣatrīya, Brahmin and Vaiśya—should be used and that so far as Saṃskṛt is concerned, only such words as are easily intelligible to the ordinary reader should be used. *Līlātilakam* further stipulates that the works written with Saṃskṛt and Malayāḷam words (*i.e.* Maṇipravāḷa style) should appear to the reader as having been written only in Malayāḷam and should never give the impression that they had been written in Saṃskṛt.

Based on this classification, the Maṇipravāḷa works in Malayāḷam have been classified into three categories:

(*a*) *Uttama*—wherein the Malayāḷam words used number more than the Saṃskṛt ones.

(*b*) *Madhyama*—wherein the Malayāḷam and the Saṃskṛt words are equal in number.

(*c*) *Adhama*—wherein the Saṃskṛt words have a predominance over the Malayāḷam ones.

The authors of the works in Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam had adopted the Saṃskṛt metre rather than the Malayāḷam metre in composing their works.

In the same way, when writing the prose portion in *Campūkāvya* (a mixture of prose and poetry), the authors had applied the poetical *taraṅgiṇī* metre to the prose portion of the work.

In essence, *Līlātilakam* says that the Maṇipravāḷa style is a happy fusion of the Malayāḷam and the Saṃskṛt languages, written with a view to appeal to the literati.

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Līlātilakam, while defining and discussing the Maṇipravāḷa style, also defines another literary style called *Pāṭṭu*. Just as in the Maṇipravāḷa style the *Pāṭṭu* also has a large mixture of Saṃskṛt and Malayāḷam words. But the essential point to note is that Pāṭṭu is lyrical in composition and is meant to be sung. In it, the composition adopts more often the Tamilian rhymes and metres than the Saṃskṛt forms. Saṃskṛt words are also written with their forms adapted to Malayāḷam.

In conclusion, the main features of the Maṇipravāḷa style in Malayāḷam are the use of Saṃskṛt words with Saṃskṛt endings and suffixes and the use of Malayāḷam words with Saṃskṛt endings and suffixes.

Maṇiprvāḷa style in Kannaḍa:

There are two styles of writing in the Kannaḍa language: (a) *kavirāja paddhati* and (b) *deśī paddhati*. *Kavirāja paddhati* adopted a style in which Saṃskṛt words predominated over Kannaḍa words and *deśī paddhati* gave prominence to Kannaḍa words rather than Saṃskṛt words.

The *kavirāja paddhati* style of writing was very popular. In about 1005 A.D., Pārśvanāthakavi in his *Pārśvanāthapurāṇa* refers to a work called *Rūpastavana* by Agalakavi, a Jain poet and says that it had been written in Maṇipravāḷa in praise of Jinanātha.

We have only one book by Agalakavi available at present by the name of *Candraprabhāpurāṇa* written in the style of *campūkāvya*—a mixture of prose and poetry. There are conflicting opinions as to whether Agalakavi wrote his *Rūpastavana* as an independent work or whether it formed part of his work *Candraprabhāpurāṇa*. This is an unsolved question since the original editors of the work *Candraprabhāpurāṇa* had rejected as defective nine stanzas from this work. The editors had not specified what were the defects which caused them to reject these stanzas. In the absence of these portions one cannot come to a definite conclusion whether the rejected portions were in Maṇipravāḷa or not. One reason for thinking that the rejected portions, could be the missing *Rūpastavana* is that the Jain poets were in the habit of entitling their works *stavanas* (eulogies) and even in the work *Candraprabhāpurāṇa* are found many *stavanas* couched in this style. Therefore there are no samples available now of the Maṇipravāḷa style of writing in Kannaḍa and the only reference to such kind of writing is that found in the *Pārśvanāthapurāṇa* by Pārśvanāthakavi.

Mere mixture of Saṃskṛt words and Kannaḍa words cannot be called Maṇipravāḷa, because, if one were to do so, the whole of Kannaḍa literature should be called Maṇipravāḷa. Kannaḍa draws heavily upon the store of Saṃskṛt words and there is free interplay of Saṃskṛt and Kannaḍa words in the Kannaḍa literature. Anyway, no one, including the Kannaḍa speaking people, calls such a writing Maṇipravāḷa.

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Maṇipravāḷa style in Telugu :

Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa, a classmate of Nannayya who was considered to be a great Telugu poet, was a great scholar in Kannaḍa too and composed a number of stanzas in Kannaḍa.

Just as in Kannaḍa, there were two styles of writing in Telugu, under the names:

(a) *Mārga paddhati* and

(b) *Dēśi paddhati*

The former favoured the use of Saṃskṛt words in its writing and the latter the use of Telugu words.

Nannayya adopted the *mārga paddhati* when he composed his *Mahābhārata* in Telugu. He was the first poet to use Saṃskṛt words with Saṃskṛt declensions and even the conjugation of Saṃskṛt verbs. Nannayya looked with contempt on the *deśi* style of writing in which Telugu words predominated. He favoured the *mārga paddhati* as can be seen from his writings.

Whereas Nannayya favoured the *mārga paddhati* style of writing, poets like Nannecoda favoured the *deśi* style of writing in which Telugu words received prominence over Saṃskṛt words. The movement in favour of the *deśi* style of writing not only started among the poets but also got the support of the Cālūkya kings. This is seen from the inscriptions that had been carved in Cālūkya times.

Though Nannayya favoured the *mārga paddhati* in which Saṃskṛt suffixes predominated, he never gave it the appellation Maṇipravāḷa. The earliest time when the word Maṇipravāḷa appears in Telugu literature was in the thirteenth century. Pālkuriki Somanāthaśarma in his *Ṛṣādhibhaśaṭaka* composed six stanzas using Saṃskṛt words with both Saṃskṛt and Telugu endings, followed by one stanza using Saṃskṛt, Telugu and Tamil words, another stanza using Saṃskṛt, Telugu and Marāṭhī words. He called each stanza a Maṇipravāḷa composition. This is strange, as this is contrary to any known definition of Maṇipravāḷa and certainly far from that given in *Līlātilakam* in Malayāḷam.

Some scholars erroneously tend to think that there is more than one form of Maṇipravāḷa and that even Pālkuriki Somanāthaśarma was adept in handling all three. For instance Pandita Vangūru Subba Rao in his *Śatakakavicaritram* says that Somanāthaśarma had written three forms of Maṇipravāḷa—(a) *āruḍhamaṇipravāḷamu*, (b) *vāgdeyamaṇipravāḷamu* and (c) *gūḍhamaṇipravāḷamu* in his *Ṛṣādhibhaśaṭaka* and had quoted extracts from that work in support of his statement. But a closer study of these samples shows that they do not differ essentially and that the epithets *arudu*, *vāgdeya* and *gūḍa* are used only to indicate the nature of these stanzas: *gūḍa* means 'with'; *vāgdeya* is a vocative form indicating the excellence of the previous sentence, and *arudu* means rare or beautiful and refers to a particular sentence.

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From the above, it will be seen that the Maṇipravāḷa style in Telugu consisted of such writings as those which used predominantly Saṃskṛt words with Saṃskṛt endings. No actual reference to the Maṇipravāḷa style is available in Telugu literature apart from that already mentioned above, *i.e.* the reference found in *Ṛṣādhibaśṭaka*. Apart from that, today, we have only a few unconnected and independent stanzas by anonymous authors in Maṇipravāḷa style in Telugu.

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APPENDIX II

The Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas developed their own style of Maṇipravāḷa prose. In this note wish to summarize the important variations of style found among the Ācāryas, and briefly mention how Maṇipravāḷa was written in the palm leaf manuscripts and later printed in books.

As we have previously noted, Maṇipravāḷa is the Tamiḷ prose which freely mixes Saṃskṛt and Tamiḷ words. How these words were mixed and in what form they were used differed from writer to writer according to his own scholarship and capacity to essay a different style. For example, Piḷḷāṉ, the first Śrīvaiṣṇava to use the Maṇipravāḷa prose used long compound sentences; when he uses Saṃskṛt words, he provides Tamiḷ endings. Next, Naṉjīyar avoided long compound sentences in favour of simple sentences. Vatakkuttiruvītipiḷḷai and Periyavāccāṉpiḷḷai use more Tamiḷ vocabulary (the ratio was about 2:1), while Piḷḷailōkācarya, the next Maṇipravāḷa writer, used still more Tamiḷ vocabulary (3:1) and introduced the *sūtra* style into Maṇipravāḷa prose. Vedāntadeśika reverted to a Saṃskṛt dominated Tamiḷ prose (3:2) although he also wrote works in pure Tamiḷ (as well as in Saṃskṛt). Aḻakiyamaṇavāḷaperumāḷnāyaṉār's Maṇipravāḷa is largely Tamiḷ (4:1) and difficult prose, whereas Manavālamāmuṇikal who came after him used the simplest prose style of all the Ācāryas. Thus we find considerable variation in the style of Maṇipravāḷa. We offer the following samples of the prose style of our Maṇipravāḷa authors.

Āṟāyirappaṭi: (10:2:11)

Priyatamarkaḷukku priyatamaikaḷ bhōgyamāmāpōlē tirunāṭṭiluḷḷarkkum ittiruvāymoḻivallār bhōgyamāvarenkiṟar. (Skt. 4: Ta. 2)

Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi: (10:2:11)

muṭivillāta pukaḻaiyuṭaiyanāyt tiruvanantapurattilē
sannihitaṉāṉa jagat kāraṇabhūtapuruṣaṉai samṛddhamāṉa
tirunakariyaiyuṭaiya Āḻvār aruḷicceyta, āyiram tiruvāy-
moḻiyiḻum. (Skt. 3: Ta. 5)

Muppattārāyirappaṭi: (10:1:11)

Parama padattai viṭṭu tiruvanantapurattilē vantu
āśritarkkākak kaṇvaḻarntaruḷukaiyālē pukaḻukku
orumuṭivillai yāyittu avarukku. (Skt. 2: Ta. 4)

Piḷḷailokācārya's *Śrīvacana Bhūṣaṇam*: (4:391)

Paḻaiyatāka naṭuvatu viḻaivatāyppōrum kṣētrattilē
utirimuḻaittu phalaparyantamāpōlē, ivaitaṉṉaṭaiyē
viṭaiyumpaṭiyāyiṟṟu bhaktiyuḻavaṇ paḻam puṉattai
sṛṣṭitta kaṭṭaḻai. (Skt. 4: Ta. 9)

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Vedāntadeśika's *Rahasyatrayasāra*: (Vol. I, p. 31.)

ittālē sarvattiṉuṭaiyavum sattāṉuvṛttirūpaiyāṉa
sthītiyum īśvarēchādhīnaiyāṉapaṭiyālē sarvamum
īśvarasaṅklpāśritam eṉṟu collukiratu (Skt. 4: Ta. 4)

Next we wish to point out that Maṇipravāḷa was generally written in Tamiḷ, script with *grantha* characters for those sounds which are not found in Tamiḷ, or else it was completely written in Telugu script with the addition of the Tamiḷ characters for the two sounds peculiar to Tamiḷ: ḷ (ழ) and ṟ (ற). When Tamiḷ script was used, often the direct Saṃskṛt quotations were completely written in *grantha* characters. Or if a Saṃskṛt technical term or unfamiliar word was used, it too appeared in *grantha*. With Saṃskṛt vocabulary that was commonly used in Tamiḷ, we find just that the Saṃskṛt sounds may appear in grantha characters, although often the word itself may have been in such common use that it was given a Tamiḷ form and written completely with Tamiḷ characters. When printing replaced the hand-written manuscripts, the Tamiḷ script with the addition of grantha characters, as we have just described, was used as was Telugu script. Telugu script was known to many Tamilians as Telugu was a neighbouring Dravidian language and had the advantage over Tamiḷ script of containing characters for the Saṃskṛt sounds We offer two examples of the printing of Maṇipravāḷa literature. (See the two following pages.)

After the use of Maṇipravāḷa in inscriptions, the prose of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas provides one of the main literatures to study the development of this style. Vaiṣṇava Maṇipravāḷa contains special verbs, special combinations of words, unique phrases, and proverbs whose study so far has been ignored yet demands attention if the study of this prose form is to be complete. Unfortunately, this topic was outside the scope of our present study, but we encourage its investigation because of its historic value. Finally, we might point out that Maṇipravāḷa is still used today in the orthodox Vaiṣṇava families of Tamiḷnāṭu, especially in invitations, letters, etc.

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న్తరసమ్బన్ధమ్ అప్రాప్తమెన్నుమిడముమ్ చరమపదత్తాలే శొల్లిన్ గాయిన్ఱు.

ఆక ఇత్తాల్ చేతననుడైయ ప్రకృతిపరత్వముమ్, ప్రకృతిపర నుడైయశేషత్వముమ్, శేషత్వత్తినుడైయ అనన్యార్హత్తైయుమ్, అన న్యార్హ శేషత్వ ప్రతిసమ్బన్ధియ్యుమ్, అనన్యార్హ శేషభూతనుడైయ అహఙ్కారమమకారనివృత్తియ్యుమ్, తన్నివృత్తమాన స్వరూపత్తి నుడైయ అత్యన్తపారతన్త్ర్యత్తైయుమ్, పారతన్త్ర్యకాష్ఠైయాన తదీయ శేషత్వత్తైయుమ్, పరతన్త్రనుక్కు అనురూపమాన ఉపాయత్తైయుమ్, ఉపాయఫలమాన కైఙ్కర్యత్తైయుమ్, కైఙ్కర్యప్రతిసమ్బన్ధియ్యుమ్ శొల్లుకిఱతు.

రక్షకాన్తరప్రతిపత్తియుణ్డానపోతు, అకారార్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్ పట్ట తిత్తైయాకక్కడవతు. స్వస్వాతన్త్ర్యమ్నడైయాడిన్ గాకిల్, చతుర్థ్యర్థమ్నెఞ్జిల్ పట్టతిత్తైయాకక్కడవతు. శేష్యన్తరప్రతిపత్తి ఉణ్డాయిన్ గాకిల్,ఉకారార్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్ పట్టతిత్తైయాకక్కడవతు. దేహాత్మాభిమా నమ్నడైయాడిన్ గాకిల్, మకారార్థమ్నెఞ్జిల్పట్టతిత్తైయాకక్కడవతు. సాధనాన్తరరుచియుమ్ శ్రీవైష్ణవర్కళ్పక్కల్, సజాతీయత్వప్రతిపత్తి యుమ్ నడైయాడిన్ గాకిల్, నమశ్శబ్దార్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్ పట్టతిత్తైయాక క్కడవతు. ఈశ్వరవిభూతిభూతరోడేరాగద్వేషమ్ నడైయాడిన్ గాకిల్, నారశబ్దార్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్ పట్టతిత్తైయాకక్కడవతు. అబన్ధుక్కళ్ పక్కల్ బన్ధుత్వప్రతిపత్తియుణ్డాయిన్ గాకిల్, అయనశబ్దార్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్పట్టతిత్తై యాకక్కడవతు. ప్రయోజనాన్తరరుచియుణ్డాయిన్ గాకిల్, చతుర్థ్యర్థమ్ నెఞ్జిల్పట్టతిత్తైయాకక్కడనతు.

పరన్తరహస్యమ్ తిరుమన్త్రప్రకరణమ్ ముట్రిట్రు.

పెరియవాచ్చాన్బిళ్ళైతిరువడిగళేశరణమ్.

Parandarahasyam of Periyavaccan Pillai printed in Telugu Script in the year 1911.

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கூசஅ

தனி உரமம்.

அநிஷ்டநிவ்ருத்தியும் இஷ்டப்ராப்தியும் ஸ்வரனுடைய க்ருபா ப்ரவாஹக்ருத்யமாக மநீயத்திலே உடையவரருளிச் செய்தருளினர்.

ஆகையால் இப்படி ஸரண்யன் சொல்லுகைக்கடி இஷ்டப்ராப்திரூபமான கைங்கர்ய மிவனுக்கு ஸ்வாஹஸிக மென்னுமாகாரந் தோற்றுகைக்காகவும், அநிஷ்ட நிவ்ருத்தியுண்டானபோதே ஸஹஜமான இஷ்டப்ராப்தியு முண்டென்றும், அநிஷ்ட நிவ்ருத்திபினுடைய ப்ராயாஸத்தைப்பற்ற வருளிச்செய்கிருன்.

(கக) தேம், (அஹம்) என்று உபாயக்ருத்யஞ் சொல்லி நின்றது. மேல், (த்வா) என்று நிக்ஷிப்தஹரனை வியிகாரிக்ருத்யஞ்சொல்லுகிறது.

(மாஸுசஃ) ஸோகியாதே கொள்ளென்றபடி. [வ்ரஜ] என்கிற வியிபோபாதி (மாஸுசஃ) என்கிறவிதுவும் வியிபாகையாலே ஸ்வீகாரத்தோபாதி ஸோகநிவ்ருத்தியும் கர்தவ்யமென்கை. ஆகையாலே, ப்ரபந்நனுக்கு பாவத் மலப்ராப்தி, நிர்ஹரத்வாத ஸர்யாநம் கர்தவ்ய மென்றதாய்த்து. ஸ்வீக்ருதோபாயனை பின்பு ஸோகித்தானில் ப்ரபத்திநிஷ்டைக்குஹாநியுண்டாய் அத்தாலே மலவிலம்ப முண்டாகக் கடவது.

மலியசய்த்து - மலாலஸஹத்தில் ஸோகிப்பான். உபாயகர்தாவசய்த்து - உபாயமில்லையென்று ஸோகிப்பான். இவ்வுபாயத்தில் மலித்வகர்த்ருத்வங்களிரண்டு முனக்கில்லை. இனி, காலாவஸியுமுமாய்ரனே கர்த்தாவுமாயிருக்கையாலே நீ ஸோகிக்கவேண்டா, வென்கை. (ஸக்ருதேவ ப்ரபந்நஸ்ய க்ருத்யாகரணாதர்யநிஷ்யதே) என்கையாலே, கர்த்தவ்யாஸ முண்டென்று ஸோகிக்கவேண்டா.

(மாம்-அஹம்) என்கையாலே, உன்விலக்காமை பார்த்திருக்கிறேரும் விலராகையாலும், கிரோயிநிரஸந ஸமர்யனுகையாலும் ஸோகிக்கவேண்டா. ஆகையாலே "உன்னைப்பார்த்தாலும்ஸோகிக்கவேண்டா. என்னைப்பார்த்தாலும் ஸோகிக்கவேண்டா,நிர்ஹரனுயிரு" என்கை.†

" உடையவனுக்கு க்ருஷிபண்ணுவான். கர்ஷகனுக்கு மலம் ஹரிப்பான். மலியாய்த்துமலாலாஹத்தில் ஸோகிப்பான். இவை மித்தனையு முனக்கில்லாமையாலே ஸோகியாதே " என்றதாய்த்து.

இனிஸோகித்தாயாகில், உன்ஸ்வரூபத்தையுமழித்து, என்ப்ரஹ்மத்தையுமழித்தாயாமித்தனே. முன்பு ஸோகித்ததில்லையாகில் அபிகாரவிதியி மில்லை, பின்புஸோகித்தாயாகில் மலவிதியிமில்லை.

இத்தால் (அதஸ்த்வ தத்வதோ மதீஜ்ஞாந உர்ஸநப்ராப்திஷு நிஸ்லஸ்பஸ்ஸுவமாஸ்வ) என்றபடி.

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† அதாகிறது - "உன்னைப்பார்த்து நிர்ஹரனுயிரு, என்னைப்பார்த்து நிர்ஹரனுயிரு" என்கை, என்று அதிகாரங்காண்கிறது.

Tanicaramam of Pillailokacarya printed in Tamil Script with mixture of Grantha Script in the year 1911

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